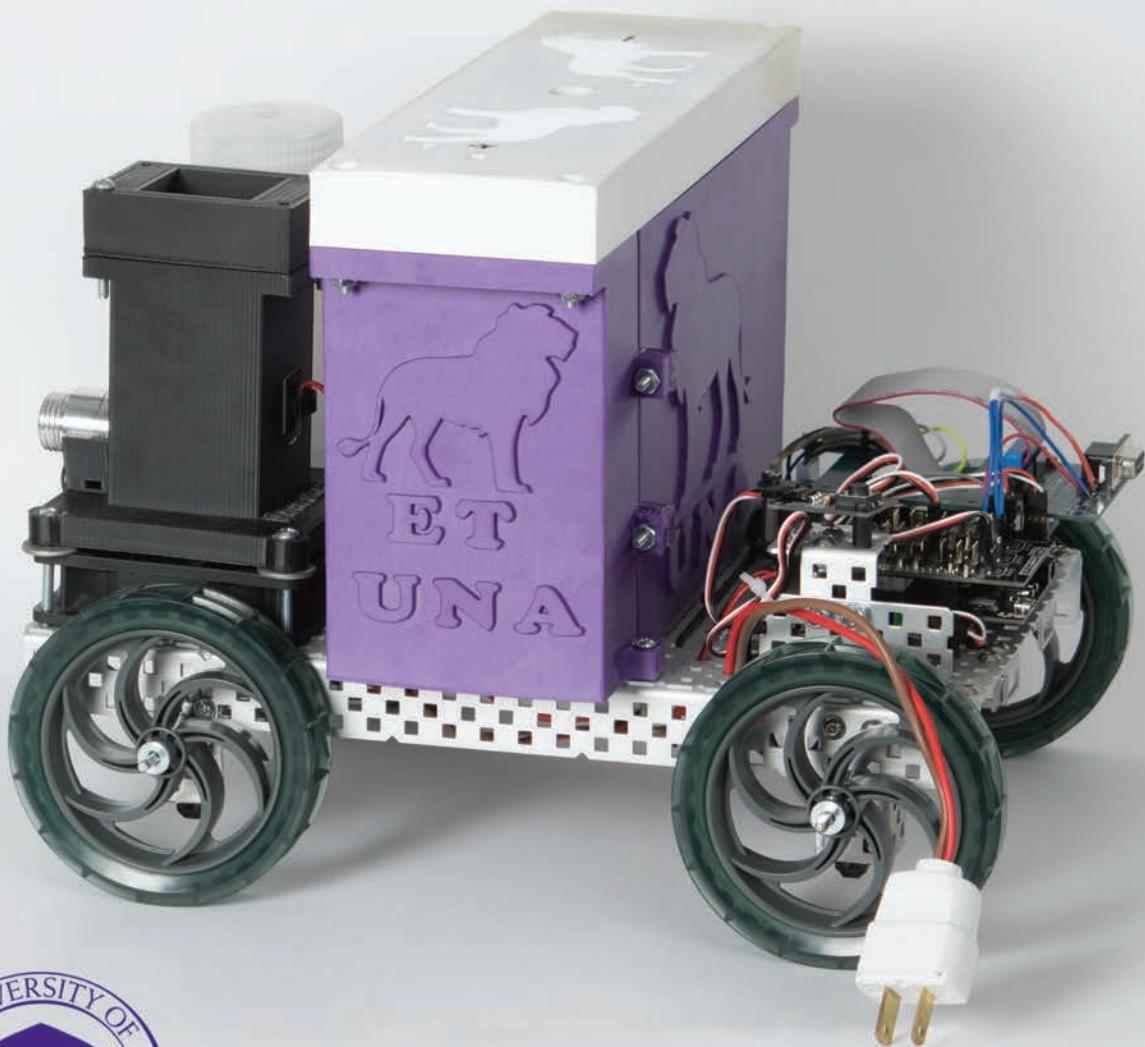


UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH ALABAMA  
MAGAZINE



FOR ALUMNI AND  
FRIENDS OF UNA

FALL 2017 • VOLUME 25  
NUMBER 2

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NUMBER 2





# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

FALL 2017 • VOLUME 25 • No. 2 • FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF UNA

## MAGAZINE

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*Information contained herein is as it currently exists but is subject to change without prior notice.*



Dr. Kenneth D. Kitts

Dear Lions,

Welcome to the Fall 2017 edition of *University of North Alabama Magazine*. The 2016-17 academic year was an impressive one at UNA, with myriad accomplishments by our faculty, staff, and students. As we look to the fall and the upcoming academic year, I'm optimistic that 2017-18 will be even better.

The recent months have been eventful ones at UNA. Dr. John Thornell stepped down from his position as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost following the spring semester, electing to return to the classroom for his final year before retirement. Dr. Ross Alexander, formerly of Indiana University-East, joined our ranks as VPAA and Provost on July 1. (You can find the profile of Dr. Alexander on page 14.) We have demolished Floyd Hall to make way for Harrison Hall, future home of the Anderson College of Nursing, and we're set to begin work on phase two of the Connie D.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Kenneth D. Kitts

McKinney Department of Human Sciences, Hospitality, and Design.

Our academic programs are continuing at a high level. In this edition of the magazine, you'll read about our Engineering Technology program and how we're competing with some of the top schools in both the state and the nation. Art student Mollie Schaefer became UNA's first ever Fulbright scholarship recipient. Additionally, a team from our College of Business presented an Economic Impact study that shows UNA contributes more than \$316 million per year to the local economies in Lauderdale and Colbert counties. Make sure to read the story featured on page 16 to learn more about the enormous impact UNA has on our region.

Lion Athletics continues to garner awards and accolades, with Jacob Tucker and Natasha Fomina taking top honors as athletes of the year in the GSC. We are excited to see what the football team can do under the tutelage of new head coach Chris Willis. As with most universities in the South, fall at UNA means football and Homecoming. It's always wonderful to see our alumni and friends return to campus for a time of celebration, reminiscing, and reconnection. "Reeling in the Years" is our theme for 2017. Take a look at the Homecoming brochure



we've included. You're sure to find something there that interests you.

We're still hard at work on our comprehensive campaign. "Build the Pride" continues to see much success, and our current total of \$31.2 million puts us well on our way to our goal of \$35 million. For additional information, take a few moments to read Dr. Deborah Shaw's campaign update. Please remember that you can always visit [una.edu/campaign](http://una.edu/campaign) to pledge your support.

Dena and I hope to see you on campus this fall. Stop by for a bite at the Panda Express which is now open in the GUC, take a walk through the impressive Science and Technology building, and explore some of the new offerings in vibrant downtown Florence. You'll sense the spirit of optimism that promises great things on the horizon for the future of UNA.

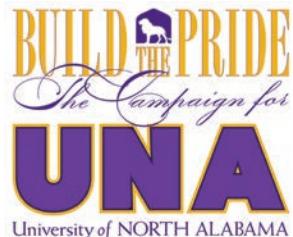
Roar Lions!  
Ken Kitts



Dr. Deborah Shaw '82

## CAMPAIGN UPDATE

*from the VP for Advancement & Executive Director of the UNA Foundation*



I am happy to report that we have made great progress on our comprehensive campaign. We have raised over \$31.2 million toward our goal of \$35 million, thanks to the many generous donors who have chosen to support our great University. We need and humbly request your participation! No donation is too small, and we appreciate every single dollar.

Please mark your calendar for UNA's "Annual Day of Giving," which will be held on November 28. This will be our second year to coordinate this social media push to ask alumni and friends to give within a 24-hour period. We want everyone involved, and hope you

will have fun with this project and help UNA beat last year's record of raising over \$41,000 in such a small amount of time.

We hope you will make plans to celebrate with us by attending UNA's upcoming Homecoming, which is the weekend of October 5-7. There are numerous events planned, and you will find there is something for everyone. Please make plans to return to our campus and the Shoals area, and come celebrate with us.

Roar Lions,  
Debbie



# THE UNA *Effect*





It probably comes as no surprise to most who live in the Shoals area that the University of North Alabama has and continues to make a huge impact locally. If you take a look at other cities across the country, you'll often find that those with universities are often considered some of the nicest places to live.

Take a look at lists that show the best cities in the country to live in—all of the top places have a university located there. There's Austin, Texas, with the University of Texas; Fayetteville, Arkansas, with the University of Arkansas; and Raleigh/



Durham, North Carolina, with the three-university research triangle, to name a few.

UNA, which was established in 1830, now has over 140 majors and concentrations and some 7,500 students who are getting an education that will better both their futures and the futures of those around them as well.

However, those aren't the only impressive numbers the University has to show. In March 2017 an economic impact analysis was published for the 2015 to 2016 academic year. This analysis shows that the University contributes \$316 million in direct and indirect spending related to the local economy, also referred to as the Florence-Muscle Shoals Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)—this includes both Colbert and Lauderdale counties.

Because that is such a large number, it can be difficult to imagine how UNA's impact adds up to be that much. But it can all be broken down into parts, one of which is jobs.

Dr. Doug Barrett, chair of UNA's Department of Economic and Finance and co-author of the study said, "UNA does a great job of supplying jobs in the area, but students aren't the only ones who benefit from this. Currently there are 1,520 paid employees at the university—these jobs range from faculty and staff to ground crew to student employees."

In fact, according to the study, UNA may be the second largest employer in the area behind North American Lighting, which has 1,710 employees.

But that isn't where the impact ends. When more people have jobs, they are able to make more purchases, which can then go into the local economy. And when more purchases are being made, the demand for services goes up—this means that more people will be hired, creating even more jobs, which leads to even more people being able to contribute to the economy!

In other words, not only would the MSA have over 1,520 fewer jobs were UNA not here, the growth of jobs in local businesses would be lower as well.

Also, because salary increases with each degree a student gets, that means that more money goes into the economy. Those with degrees earn a higher salary which makes it possible for them to spend more money, some of which may be spent locally.

Someone with a bachelor's degree that stays in the local area has over \$1 million more in lifetime earnings to spend or save than a high school graduate. For someone with a master's degree, this number rises to \$1.5 million.

Melissa Medlin, director of the UNA Career Center, said a degree offers individuals stability in the job market.

"Additionally, having a degree illustrates to potential employers that you have started and completed a project [the degree] and thus have developed a number of soft skills including interpersonal communication skills, time management, critical thinking and decision making skills," she said.



Students and employees aren't just putting money into the local economy by buying basic needs such as housing, groceries, and apparel though; they are also contributing through charitable gifts. The analysis shows that charitable giving increases substantially with each degree someone earns. As of now, the total contribution of both UNA personnel and student households is \$10.2 million.

According to Dr. Keith Malone, professor of economics at UNA and the study's other co-author, it appears that UNA's charitable giving exceeds the Southeast average of 1.49 percent.

"I'm not sure of the exact percentage; however, skimming through the report it seems that UNA's giving percentage exceeds 2.25 percent," Malone said.

Dr. Debbie Shaw, vice president of University Advancement at UNA, said they have seen an increase in charitable giving to the university as well.

"Certainly one of the main reasons we're seeing an increase may be because we're in a comprehensive campaign," she said. "However, when we talk with donors we also find that they're more knowledgeable about how impactful their charitable dollars can be on this institution. Charitable giving becomes easier when you know that your dollars are making a difference," she said.

But charitable spending isn't the only thing that can increase with each degree a person gets; the amount of local and sales taxes increases as well. And these taxes help out the local economy considerably—\$3,619,676 to be exact.

Although this study gives insight into how much the University impacts the area, according to the study some economic impacts are difficult to quantify.

An example of this can be seen in the University's involvement in creating events with the goal of helping the Shoals economy. UNA partnered up with the Shoals Chamber of Commerce and the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center in the spring of 2014 to do just that. The movement, titled Shoals Shift, has produced 26 initiatives in the three years since it was created.

Some of these events are recurring ones that encourage entrepreneurial ideas and progress. These events include Shoals Idea Audition, Shoals Big Idea, Smart Start Weekend and Shoals Alabama Launchpad. Other initiatives give people the opportunity to create businesses such as CoStarters, the Generator, and Strategic Doing Certification courses.

Dr. Greg Carnes, dean of the UNA College of Business, said that these programs give students an opportunity to gain experience apart from the classroom and helps make entrepreneurship an integral part of the collegiate experience.

According to Carnes, students of all majors are encouraged to turn their entrepreneurial ideas from ideas to production-ready. Thirteen student-founded companies have been established from this partnership.

"If students work to produce a successful business model prior to graduation, there is a greater chance they will establish their business in the Shoals and create local jobs," Carnes said.

Because of Shoals Shift, more than 10 new local startups have been produced—there are currently other ideas in various stages as well.

In January 2016, the Institute for Innovation and Economic Development at UNA was created to coordinate and organize initiatives under Shoals Shift. In the past year alone it has helped generate over \$1 million in grants for the University and the local area.

Because of all that UNA and partners have accomplished, the Shoals was selected to host the international meeting for Strategic Doing Practitioners in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Also, the proposal to host the University Economic Development Association's (UEDA) annual summit at UNA in 2018 was accepted—this meeting generates approximately \$600,000 for the region that hosts it.

Mary Marshall VanSant, director of Continuing Education at UNA, said that collaborations like Shoals Shift benefit the area by promoting the entrepreneurial spirit that is evident in the community.

"By sponsoring start-up contests that allow ideas to become focused and saleable, these types of initiatives are instrumental in keeping local talent local," she said. "This, in turn, strengthens our economic infrastructure and feeds upon itself by enticing new industry and innovation."

Although the exact economic impact Shoals Shift has made is not included in the study, Malone said they will try to incorporate it and such efforts in the future.

As beneficial as money is to the local economy, there are other ways the University enriches the community that can't be measured exactly. But despite not having a concrete monetary value, they are just as important—they add to our quality of life.

"Think about all of the cultural events that occur because of the university: art shows, music recitals, and concerts, to name a few. Many nationally recognized authors and speakers have visited campus to speak to both students and those in the community," Barrett said. "With a lot of local events, UNA is the catalyst."

It's difficult to imagine what the Shoals and surrounding areas would be like if UNA were not around—it's been integral to the community for so long. So long, perhaps, that we may not even recognize just how much it enriches the area both financially and otherwise. But looking at this analysis, it's clear to see how noticeable it would be if it

## UNA's TOTAL IMPACT



were not here anymore. But luckily, the University isn't going anywhere.

"I am not surprised by our economic impact figure of \$316 million per year, but it is nice to have a specific figure to cite when we talk with local citizens and our community partners," said Dr. Ken Kitts, president of UNA.

"We represent a large portion of the total Shoals economy, and that's both impressive and humbling at the same time. At UNA, we have a special responsibility to continue to make good decisions so that we can remain an economic driver and cultural resource for our local communities."



# North Alabama Students Compete for Prestigious **FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS**



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*It's impressive for an institution to have one student named as a finalist for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.*

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The University of North Alabama recently had two, and one also happened to be accepted.

Mollie Schaefer was the first student in the University's history to be accepted into the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

Schaefer and fellow student Jasmine Fleming were the two finalists for the Fulbright program, which provides grants for individually designed study/research projects, or for English teaching assistant programs abroad.

Schaefer said she became aware of the program as a freshman at UNA.

"When I was a freshman," Schaefer said, "a friend of mine from Birmingham received one; but aside from that, last year I went to see my professor Dr. Matt Price and something had fallen off of his table. I picked it up and it turned out to be a pamphlet on the Fulbright program; he told me I should keep it and see if I was interested."

Schaefer looked it over and thought it might be something she'd be interested in, so she applied.

For Jasmine Fleming the process was slightly different, but the main ingredient, Dr. Matt Price, was still in the mix.

"I learned about it at UNA because Dr. Price led a session on it and talked



Martin R. Abroms, Mollie Schaefer, Justin Allred, Dr. Deborah L. Shaw

about it," Fleming said. "So from there I knew I wanted to apply, especially because he said they try to diversify the people who are accepted each year, and we've never had any students from UNA accepted; so he thought that would give us a better chance."

Price is currently the Director of Premiere Scholarships and Fellowships at UNA. He said in the 2016-17 year, UNA had eight applicants into the Fulbright program, two were finalists and one was accepted.

"It's UNA's first ever Fulbright scholarship award," Price said. "To put that into perspective, this is about a \$15,000 to \$20,000 grant to teach English abroad. Mollie will get airfare, room and board, health care, and a monthly stipend for an entire year," he said.

Price said scholarships like the Fulbright aren't usually awarded to students from regional institutions. Typically, he said the Fulbright scholars come from places that have large research infrastructures.

"Harvard and Yale clean up, of course. From that you'll just see a bunch of state universities," he said. "If you look at the state of Alabama,

Tuscaloosa does pretty well and then UAB after that. We are the first public regional master's institution in the state of Alabama to win it."

What is even more amazing? Schaefer was unable to read until she was 9 years old because of dyslexia. In a recent TimesDaily article, Schaefer said it was hard to overcome.

"That involved a lot of humiliation and self-doubt," she said. "A big thing about dyslexia is dyslexic people have big wide minds that can understand a lot of big ideas."

Schaefer graduated in May with a degree in visual art and a minor in public communication and left for the Czech Republic on her Fulbright-sponsored trip in August.

"My interest in the Czech Republic started in an art history class," she said. "There's a very rich culture of art and history and science, it seems like a very well-rounded culture and one that simultaneously I can learn a lot from, without being so different that I hole up in my room crying and missing hamburgers."

As for Price, he said he wanted to use the Fulbright as a test case; win one, and then you start creating a culture on campus where students are

routinely applying for programs like this.

"Fulbright is the small snowball that we're going to push down the hill and it's going to get bigger," he said. "That's what's so amazing. You know, by going around this campus, you just see great students. And now we have national confirmation that we have great students."

Price said the key to the whole process is providing them with support. However, perhaps Schaefer said it best.

"We're moving toward a very global society," Schaefer said. "So it's important to experience travel. I think working abroad and teaching abroad is an experience that many people don't get. Why wouldn't you apply for something like that?"

According to Fulbright online, more than 360,000 Fulbrighters from the United States and other countries have participated in the program since its inception in 1946. The Fulbright Program awards approximately 8,000 grants annually. Currently, the Fulbright Program operates in over 160 countries worldwide.



## Victoria Roose Miss UNA

Success, Scholarship, Style, and Service: these are the values that the four points of the Miss America Crown represent. This year Victoria Roose, our very own Miss University of North Alabama, has been a shining example of a young woman who embraces these values.

At the Miss Alabama Pageant in June, Victoria won the Lifestyle and Fitness competition during preliminaries and advanced to the final night of competition as a Miss Alabama Top 12 Semi-finalist. It has been 10 years since Miss UNA has made it to the state semi-finals, and making it to the semi-finals is an exceptional feat for



Roose Conducting the UNA Marching Band at Bands of America Grand National Championships



a first-time contestant at the Miss Alabama Pageant. Victoria received \$2,350 in cash scholarships for her accomplishments.

The Miss Alabama Pageant is a special opportunity, but only a small part of the Miss UNA experience. Victoria spends countless hours serving the UNA Campus and Northwest Alabama. Miss UNA represents the University at many local events serving as host or as entertainment. She visits schools, band exhibitions, and classes to promote the University and her platform, "Note to Self: Confidence through Music." She also works in the Student Engagement Center every week preparing for appearances or working on her platform.

Beyond her role as Miss UNA, Victoria is a full-time student leader. As a music education major, Victoria is a member of various music groups at the University including the UNA Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and the Studio Jazz Band. She is also a member of the Pride of Dixie Marching band where she serves as Drum Major.

The Miss University of North Alabama Scholarship Pageant and Miss Alabama also happen to have a long history, which culminated in the mid '70s with multiple winners coming from the pageant or UNA itself. In 1974, Pam Long was crowned Miss Florence State University. Later that year, she went on to become Miss Alabama and



Victoria Rooses's visit to Sheffield Headstart

in 1975 she crowned the first Miss University of North Alabama, Susie Vaughn Raney. Vaughn Raney went on to be Miss Alabama 1975. She was followed by Denise Davis, another UNA student who was crowned Miss Alabama in 1976, while UNA student Pam Battles Noblit was crowned Miss Alabama 1983 and was second runner up to Miss America.

In 2012 thanks to Billy Hammock and our friends at Creative Jewelers, an old tradition was restored. Each year, the contestants have the opportunity to design a custom ring at Creative Jewelers. Once the next Miss University of North Alabama is crowned, Creative Jewelers fashions the ring she designed and presents it to her before she departs for the Miss Alabama Scholarship Pageant.

To experience a special tradition at the University of North Alabama, join us for the Miss University of North Alabama Scholarship Pageant on Saturday, January 27, 2018, in Norton Auditorium. Tickets will go on sale online Thursday, January 4, at [www.una.edu/missuna2018](http://www.una.edu/missuna2018).



## UNA Student Accepted into Prestigious NSF Internship

University of North Alabama senior Savannah Watson was accepted into the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program.

Watson, who is currently majoring in Geographic Information Science (GIS), traveled to Northern Iowa University as part of the nationally competitive science research internship. While there, she studied for eight weeks in Interdisciplinary Research Experience in Hyperspectral Imaging.

Hyperspectral Imaging collects and processes information from across the electromagnetic spectrum with the purpose of finding objects, identifying materials, or detecting processes.

"When people ask me what it is I'll be doing, it's so hard to explain because this field is so broad," she said.

According to Watson, a simple way to put it is that you're looking at satellite imagery through different spectral bands.

"So if I wanted to look at specific vegetation to know if it's healthy or

not, I would be looking at different vegetation indices," Watson said. "The healthier vegetation would show up as one color and the not-so-healthy vegetation would be another color."

Watson said you can look at real-time data or previously uploaded information and then these spectral bands can be laid over a city or rural area to determine any number of things like disease detection for agriculture, land mine detection, urban development expansion, etc.

Watson said that while this technology is extremely beneficial to urban planning, careers in this field can be located anywhere and with multiple types of companies. As for Watson, she eventually wants to work for NASA.

"They have an urban planning section, so if someone needs to know what the heat index is for a city and where they need to plant vegetation or would a body of water be good here to lower the temperature? That's just one example, but like I said there's a lot you can do," she said.

# University of North Alabama Continues 'Light the Fountain' Tradition With Former Coach Wallace



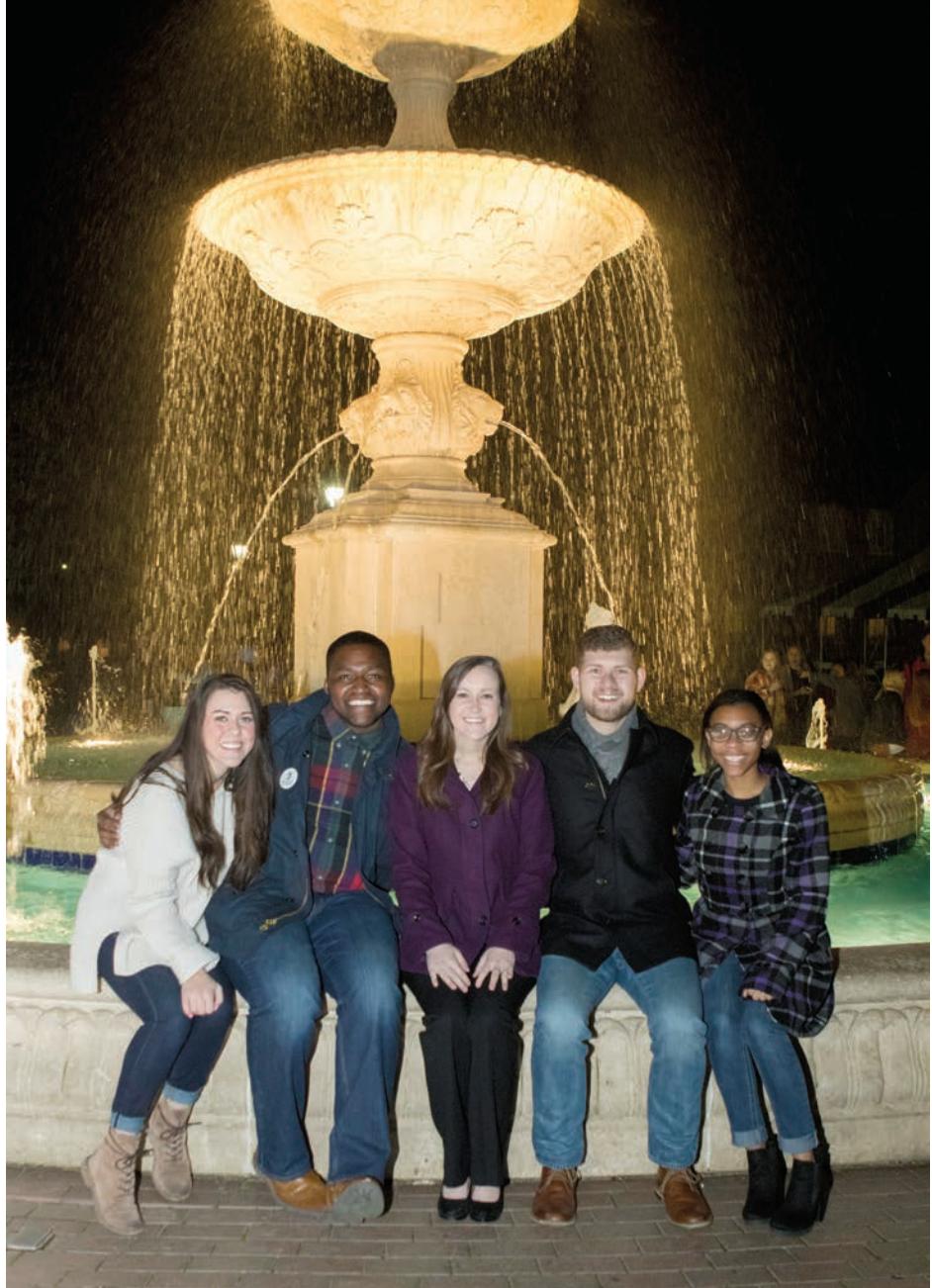
The unseasonably warm temperatures already made it feel like spring on the University of North Alabama campus. However, to officially kick off the season, the UNA Student Government Association (SGA) and the University continued a new campus tradition, "Light the Fountain."

UNA's "Light the Fountain" took place in March.

Harrison Fountain has become a signature piece on UNA's already gorgeous campus. Each year, when the fountain is turned on, students and visitors alike know that warmer weather is on the way.

This year, former UNA Head Football Coach Bobby Wallace had the honor of lighting the fountain to honor his many years of outstanding service to the University.

UNA Vice President for Student Affairs David Shields said the event



was an excellent tradition on UNA's campus.

"Lighting the Fountain" is a special event and a new tradition at the University. In only our second year, it has become a highly anticipated event among the campus community," Shields said.

"Tradition is important in universities because it builds a special shared connection to the institution and the educational experience of our students. Like all of our special traditions at the University of North Alabama, 'Lighting the Fountain' fits in perfectly with what we always try to do here, and that's to provide

a truly unique and comprehensive student educational experience," he said.

Shields said having Coach Wallace participate in this year's event was a perfect way to say thank you.



# University of North Alabama holds 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration for Mascots

The University of North Alabama hosted a public birthday party for its lion mascots, Leo III and Una, Wednesday, April 12.

The party took place outside the lion habitat in Harrison Plaza on UNA's campus.

Leo and Una celebrated their birthday, even though technically their real birthday is in November.

Numerous school groups, including students from UNA's Kilby School, attended the event. As with most years, Leo and Una were serenaded with the traditional birthday song before being released into the habitat to enjoy their new birthday toys.

The Office of Advancement also honored the volunteers and veterinarians who care for the lions. UNA's mascots are supported by private donations.





## New VPAA and Provost, **Dr. Ross Alexander** Says Success is in Groundwork

**Dr. Ross Alexander** is the new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of North Alabama, effective July 1, 2017. Alexander was selected as the candidate of choice in a national search that yielded over 40 applicants for the position.

Alexander joins UNA from Indiana University-East in Richmond, Indiana, where he has served in various positions including Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education, and, most recently, as Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

But we also wanted to know a little bit more about the man, who will have some big shoes to fill.

Born in Wisconsin, Alexander spent a majority of his childhood in Northern Illinois, right on the Illinois/Wisconsin border.

He may have earned his bachelor's degree at Beloit College in Wisconsin; however, this was not the first college he attended. A football scholarship initially led him to Minnesota State where he did well in football, but not as well academically.

"I kind of realized that I needed to make a change for academic reasons, so I transferred to Beloit College, a small, liberal arts school. It was the best thing I did," he said.

Originally, Alexander planned on working as a city or county manager, which led him to Arizona State after graduation from Beloit. At ASU, Alexander earned a master's in public administration; however, job hunting still wasn't on his radar.

"Once I got to Arizona State, I really excelled academically and I thought to myself, 'Well, I might just see about applying to some Ph.D. programs,' and I did, and I got into several."

One of those schools included Northern Illinois, where he earned a Ph.D. in political science with majors in public administration and

American politics. This was also where Alexander had his first taste of teaching and academia, which he said he "enjoyed very much."

So much so, that his first academic job was as a visiting faculty member at Dominican University in Chicago. Alexander followed Dominican with an eight-and-a-half year stint at the University of North Georgia, which he then followed with his most recent job at Indiana University-East.

Now that journey has led him to UNA, where Alexander has hit the ground running.

One of the reasons Alexander said he was drawn to UNA was because of President Kitts.

"I really was taken with his vision, his approach, and his goals and objectives for the campus. I want to be a part of it, and I want to help him achieve those goals on the academic side."

When asked about challenges he might face, he said that so far, the only ones he sees are those most colleges face, such as the budget.

"I look forward to working very closely with Mr. Thornton on maybe seeing where we can find resources to support new programs in new ways and existing programs in new ways," he said. "I was put in a place to succeed by Dr. Thornell's very able leadership and management as well as Dr. Kitts' positioning for me to come in and really, really be able to succeed."

One thing people can expect from Alexander in the future is his presence on campus.

They're going to see me a lot," he said. "It's very important for me to develop strong relationships with the faculty, with the staff, and with those people that I want to ask to partner with on initiatives and programs and maybe think of things and look at things a little bit differently."

Which is one reason why Alexander and President Kitts have

met and will continue meeting with all of the campus' many departments.

"Organizations are only as successful as the people within them. And success and leadership is about interpersonal relationships. If we're going to succeed, it's going to be together, and it's because we know and trust one another."

Lest you think he's forgotten about his roots, Alexander will also teach an online political science class in spring 2018.

"I plan on doing at least one class a year because it is very important that I maintain a connection with students, with the faculty, and with developments—curricular developments both in the traditional and online environments."

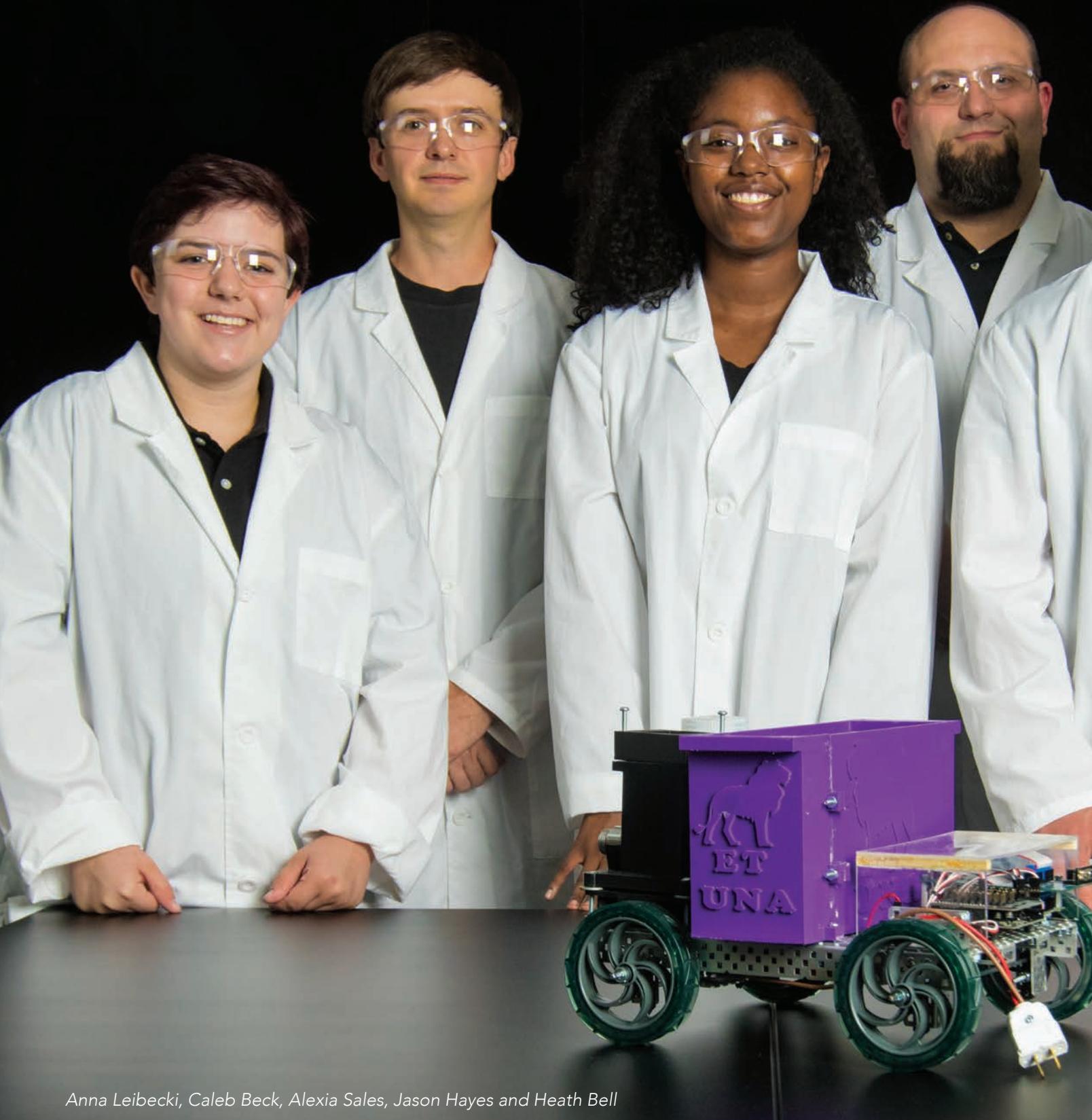
Along with a new job and a recent move, Alexander and his wife Lilia also had their first child recently—Victoria Rose.

"All of those major life changes that are supposed to be spread out, we kind of did in about a one-month period."

Alexander said the position and the surrounding community make it all worthwhile.

"From a growth standpoint, from a vibrancy standpoint, from an outdoor activities, outdoor lifestyle standpoint, this really kind of ticked off all of the boxes," he said. "This is the most beautiful campus that I've ever worked at, or really one of the most beautiful I've ever seen. If you've been here a long time or you grew up here, you might take it a little bit for granted, but coming from somewhere that's not as aesthetically pleasing, it's a much different story."





Anna Leibeki, Caleb Beck, Alexia Sales, Jason Hayes and Heath Bell



# Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead. . .

We may all soon be hailing our new robot overlords because of rapid advancements in technology, and in part that will be thanks to the students in the University of North Alabama's Department of Engineering Technology. Headed up by Drs. Peter Rim and Dongqing Pan, the program is structured "to provide a supportive environment where the students can learn to become skilled, motivated, and ethical engineering technologists."

Upon graduation, students will be prepared for a multitude of roles due to the interdisciplinary nature of the program, and that has been a huge boon for interest and enrollment in the major. "Our unique curriculum," said Dr. Rim, "combines electrical and mechanical disciplines to prepare our students for a multitude of opportunities. The students have taken advantage of our co-op program, and preparation for

careers in automated manufacturing and robotics seem to be a big draw as well."

The University is particularly suited for a program like this one, with the professional landscape in the North Alabama area boasting the highest density of engineering jobs in the nation. That density means opportunities for jobs after graduation, as well as mentorships, internships, and similar opportunities with industry leaders. Employers throughout the region are constantly seeking engineers, and UNA students are looking to become valuable contributors to the region.

With the idea of combining disciplines in mind, Dr. Rim and the students landed on the American Institute of Chemical Engineers' (AIChE) Chem-E-Car competition, where college students design and construct a car powered by a chemical energy source. The car must be able



to safely carry a specified load over a given distance. Because he has been involved with running a winning Chem-E-Car team for many years, the students were encouraged about their chances in the competition, and Dr. Rim knew it would be a great starter project for the engineering technology students. They started working on setting up a student chapter of the AIChE at UNA.

Caleb Beck, Chem-E-Car team captain and president of the AIChE chapter, explained how the team was formed. "We had to have at least twelve people to get the chapter, and we started the car team, which was initially those twelve. But after about a couple of months, it got narrowed down to us five, and here we are."

The five students who made the cut are Alexia Sales from Huntsville,

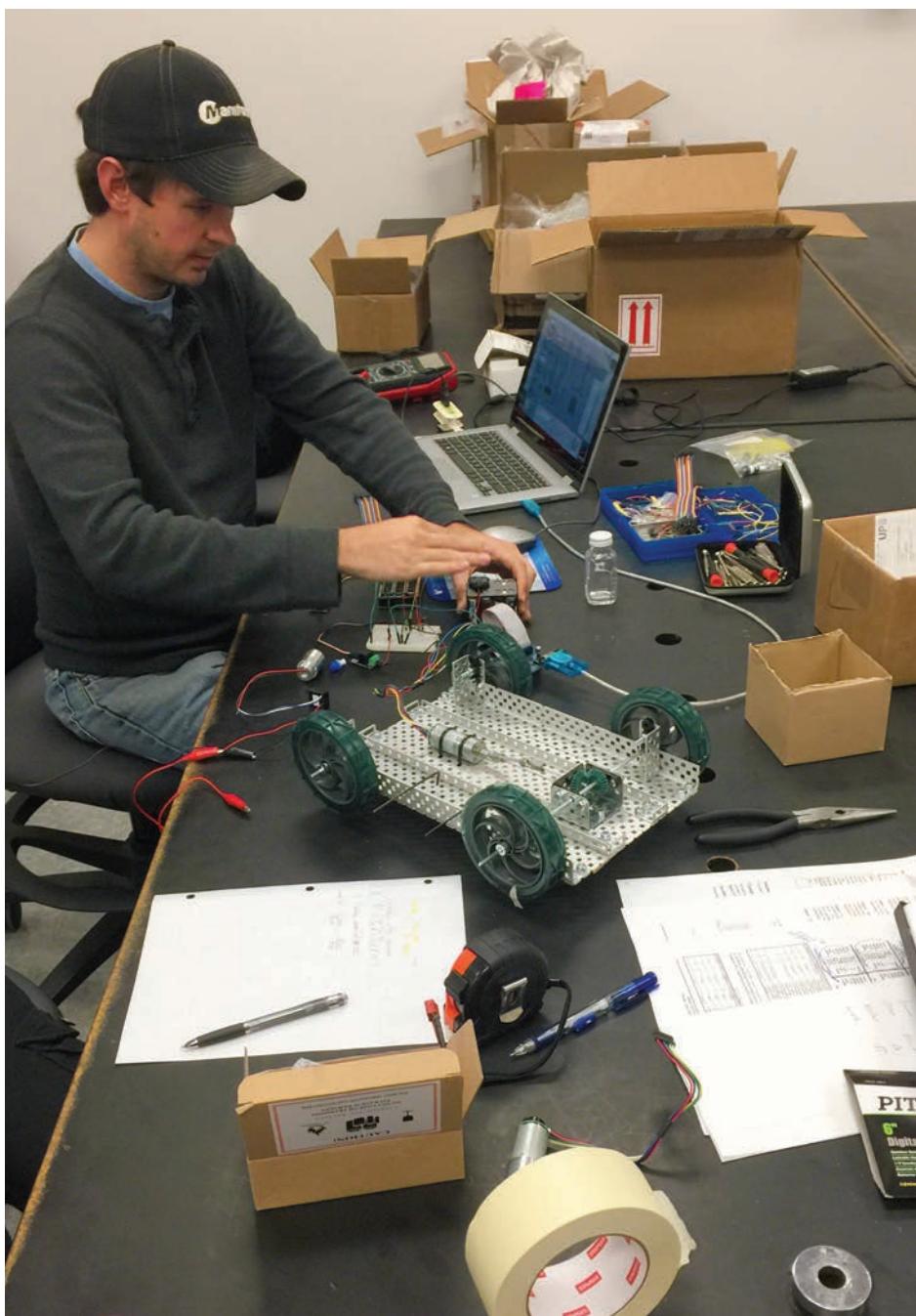
Anna Leibecki from Rogersville, Heath Bell from Somerville, Jason Hayes from Killen, and Caleb Beck from Muscle Shoals. The students who became a team weren't necessarily close beforehand, but they became close during the months they devoted to perfecting their project. Spending long hours in a lab on such a collaborative project caused them to become friends.

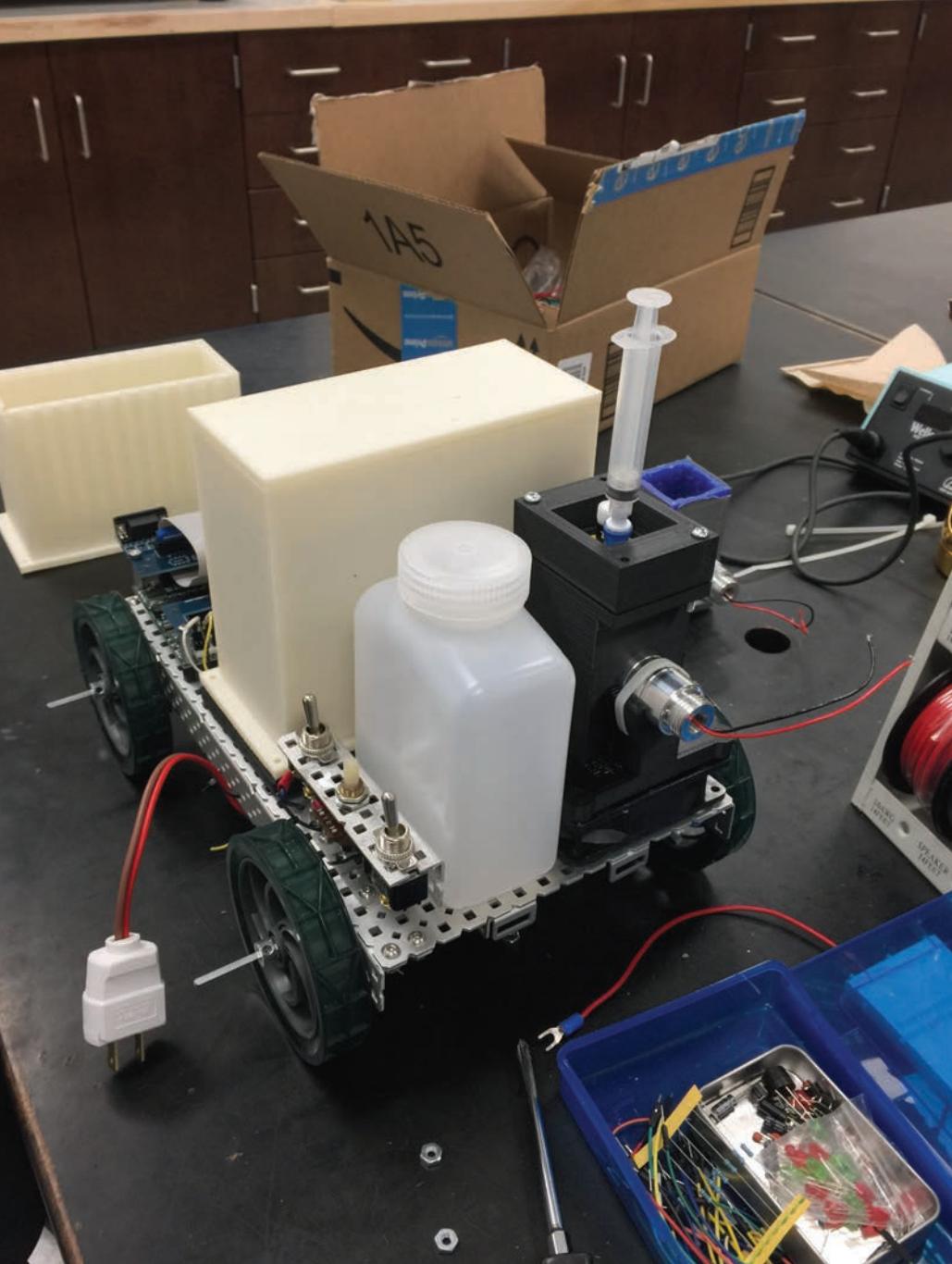
Dr. Rim says that the Chem-E-Car "is the perfect project for our program because it combines the disciplines of chemical, mechanical, and electrical engineering and computer science." The car itself is entirely autonomous, powered solely by the student-designed chemical battery and controlled by their carefully calculated and programmed formulas.

The first cohort of engineering technology students defied the odds and beat out more established teams in the competition, finishing in fourth place and earning a spot in the national competition held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, this fall. This achievement speaks highly for the program, its professors, and its students. While the program may be in its infancy, the already-impressive caliber of its recruits will only increase because of the notoriety it is already garnering.

The UNA team had some scares, too. After months of late-night research, after-class testing, team building and elbow grease, their first attempt in the competition "ended in a battery malfunction, and our car maybe went two feet," according to Jason Hayes. The team then had to rebuild the battery on the spot for their second-and-final run.

The team didn't let such a minor issue as having to completely rebuild one of the most important elements of the car





deter them, though. They had worked too hard to make their first appearance at the competition a memorable one. The second run went 86.6 feet, a significant improvement, and only a few feet from the goal of 90.

The students who designed and built the Chem-E-Car are pretty diverse in their specialties and interests as the curriculum itself. From freshmen to seasoned engineers already working in the field, the program has attracted students who are dual-majoring in both the humanities and science, as well as non-traditional students, returning to UNA for additional training

on top of their decades of experience in the field. They returned to school specifically because of the variety of skills and experiences they would get from the program.

Engineering technology has a bright future ahead of it at UNA. Not only because the faculty cares so much and pushes the students to succeed, but also because of the community and academic foundation they have access to at UNA. Being at UNA, Rim said, "provides our students with the opportunity to gain both multidisciplinary engineering skills and business acumen, both of which are

desired by our industrial stakeholders. Also, the College of Business has many unique programs on entrepreneurship which are a perfect fit for our students."

These partnerships that the engineering tech faculty have set up across campus and the region will pay dividends for the students who go through the program. The campus partnerships like the one with the College of Business will make graduates more desirable to the employers connected with the school, and once these students are in the workforce, more companies will want to invest in them because of the quality and diversity of their work. Caleb Beck sees that and is focused on making sure that the program and the student chapter of AIChE stays "dedicated to putting people in the workforce of the Shoals area."

If the first year is any indication, engineering technology has set itself up for astounding success in the future. But nothing comes without a cost, and that is the primary hurdle for the faculty and students to overcome. Science in any form is expensive, and when dealing with a combination of disciplines like this—especially a combination that relies so heavily on hands-on experience rather than abstract theory—it should come as little surprise that the program will need considerable funding to remain competitive.

As the program grows the department hopes to be able to add more student ventures like the AIChE Chem-E-Car competition. In addition to the annual competition the team has already won, national competitions loom in their future so travel, on top of supply and programmatic operational costs, could be a potential strain on the program.

Between careful budgeting, research, and faith in the University's trust in the program, the professors feel hopeful that the future of engineering technology will far exceed the successes in their first year.

Dr. Rim said that current ventures such as the AIChE Chem-E-Car, which is the least expensive of available opportunities, is anticipated to be over one-third of the operating budget of the program. "We will need to be creative like other departments at UNA have been to find the funds to support these activities," he said.

One-third of the operating budget being dedicated to a single project may sound like a lot, but consider this: the Chem-E-Car program functions in numerous ways. It gives students hands-on training in their chosen fields, as well as functioning as additional lab time to apply the concepts they learn about in the classroom. Perhaps most importantly, though, it serves as a recruitment tool for UNA, as prospective students see the performance and victories coming out of the program, which in turn brings in more revenue and funding.

Additionally, the engineering technology program is embracing a new movement in tech fields. Traditionally, the discipline typically falls under the catch-all classification STEM, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, but now a new discipline has been added: Arts. Now branding itself with the acronym STEAM, engineering technology is in the unique position of incorporating a liberal arts component to an otherwise hard-science field.

"The advantages of being at a university with a strong liberal arts component are many," said Rim. "Engineers need to have strong written and verbal communications skills, understand ethical decision making, and as many global companies now reside in our area, language and cultural skills are likewise key. UNA is a wonderful place to develop these skills."

Critical thinking and ethics are often the focus of humanities classes, both of which are necessary to succeed in any engineering position (or really, any position in any field). The College of Arts and

Sciences feels very strongly those skills are imperative to the students' futures, so they are incorporated into the curriculum as much as the traditional maths and sciences.

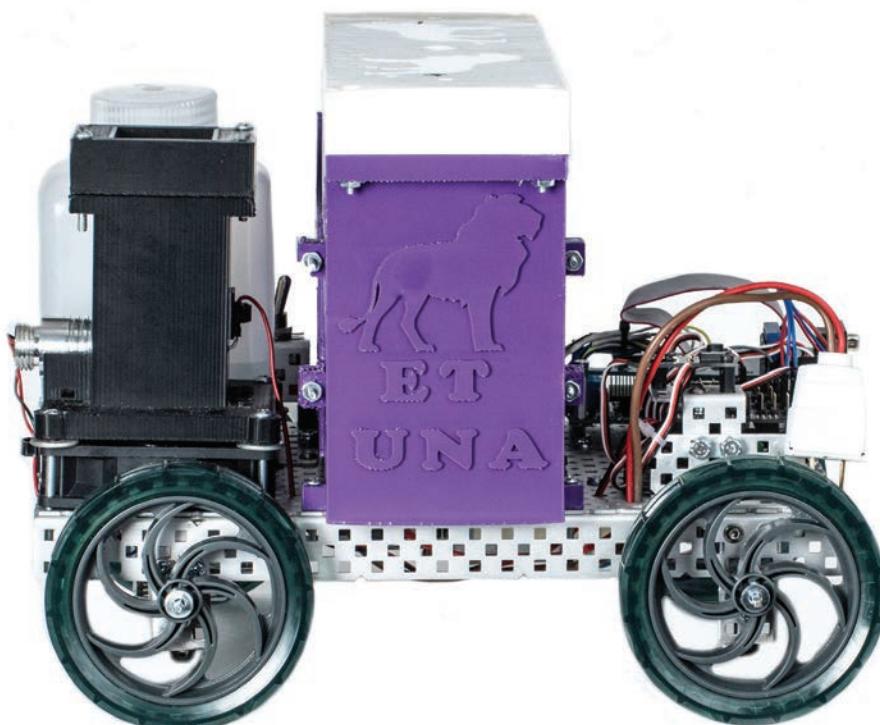
And who could forget the most obvious inclusion in STEAM—art itself. Take the Chem-E-Car for instance. Not only did it take intimate knowledge of chemistry, robotics, computer programming, and mathematics, but it also required some pretty impressive design skills. Everything about the Chem-E-Car had to be designed from scratch, from the automation programming, to the chemical reaction formulation, to the physical makeup of the car itself.

It was that physical design that most exemplifies the inclusion of the arts. The Chem-E-Car team used CAD (computer-aided design) software to make sure their vehicle was within the AIChE required dimensions. When they needed a part that wasn't available for purchase, the team did what any creative tech students

would do: they designed and 3D printed exactly which piece they needed for the project. That ingenuity and creativity, not to mention talent, is precisely what sets this program apart from its peers.

"I mean, that's why it's the College of Arts and Sciences," said Alexia Sales. "I'm a part of all of it." Sales is dual-majoring in both chemistry and English, and exemplifies the union that the administration is looking to embrace. Additionally, Caleb Beck and Jason Hayes have years of experience as professional engineers and have come back to UNA specifically for this program.

Between an amazing cohort of students, a tremendous faculty, and an incredibly supportive administration, the engineering technology program is quickly becoming one of the university's gems and, perhaps, one of its flagship programs. If the first year of its existence is any indication, the Shoals has some new robot overlords coming for us full STEAM ahead.



# PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ADVISING

### Dr. Jana P. Beaver

*Chair of the Department of Management and Marketing, Associate Professor of Management*

1998, B.S.Ed., Business and Office Ed 7-12, University of North Alabama; 2000, M.A.Ed., Business and Office Administration, University of North Alabama; 2003, Ph.D., Instructional Leadership, The University of Alabama

Dr. Jana Beaver has always found advising students to be very rewarding and time well spent. Long before she became department chair, she realized that this aspect of her job is very important for both recruiting and retention of majors and minors. She strives to provide excellent customer service and give each advisee her undivided attention. Students and parents want to get the most benefit for their investment in higher education, and this means listening to their needs and wants for the future and providing guidance for their journey, even if that translates into study in another discipline.

When the University (First Year) Advisor program started several years ago, Beaver wanted to be involved. While it was important for her personally to advise students at all stages of their college career, she was eager to assist this group of first year students. When Beaver advises freshmen during their first semester, she spends quite a bit of time asking about the adjustment to university life. Are they making new friends? Have a good roommate? Getting involved on campus? Working a part-time job and how many hours? How are classes? What is causing stress? If those things are not



going well, they work together to turn things around since these are barriers to academic success. Beaver also likes to focus on the type of class scheduling that is best to match student personalities with academic needs—an area in which, before college, students have not had much input. By the second semester, Beaver believes that students are usually ready for more in-depth conversations about their interests and in determining a major. Getting good advising and exploring career options early on allows students to maximize their experience by adding a minor, certificate, or even a double major without much extension to their college career.

Beaver also advises many upper level students, helping to put together the best course combinations for success, encouraging internships, and assisting in plans for careers or graduate school. Just as freshmen require a lot of time, some seniors need additional guidance to resolve graduation deficiencies and for career planning.

In addition, Beaver enjoys assisting students in study abroad through the Magellan Exchange Program. She reviews upcoming course offerings in the country where they will study and she works with students to achieve appropriate course equivalencies. Beaver feels it is important

that study abroad not delay scheduled graduation. Sometimes she is creative to make it work but in most cases, Beaver believes the benefits of the academic and cultural experiences far outweigh missing certain course objectives.

UNA has many international students studying in the College of Business and sometimes advising them can be challenging because of the multiple requirements for degree completions with partner schools and strict stipulations some governments have with the types of courses in which students may enroll. The international students often need extra reassurance, so Beaver typically spends a considerable amount of time advising them. However, she enjoys interacting with this population that adds a great element of diversity to the university environment.

On a daily basis, Beaver advises multiple students and during registration, it is often all she does during a workday. Students are sometimes confused or upset, sometimes they excitedly bounce in to tell her good news, and she encounters almost every other scenario imaginable. Her goal is to have students leave with answers to their questions and with a comfort level of being on the right path. Beaver likes knowing that she helped someone get through the day, or helped him or her choose a career path. Again, investing in the life of a student is time well spent.

*"There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self."*

— Aldous Huxley

## DR. JIM F. COUCH OUTSTANDING SCHOLARSHIP/ RESEARCH AWARD

### Dr. Xihui "Paul" Zhang

Associate Professor of  
Computer Information Systems

1993, B.S., Earth Sciences, Nanjing University;  
1996, M.S., Earth Sciences, Nanjing University;  
2002, M.S., Engineering Technology,  
University of Memphis; 2004, M.S.,  
Management Information Systems,  
University of Memphis; 2009, Ph.D.,  
Management Information Systems,  
University of Memphis

Dr. Xihui "Paul" Zhang is an associate professor of computer information systems in the College of Business. He joined UNA in January 2009 before he earned a Ph.D. in business administration with a concentration in management information systems from the University of Memphis in August 2009.

Zhang is a prolific researcher with interests ranging from social and organizational aspects of information systems to software development and testing, as well as business intelligence and data warehousing. His dissertation, *Understanding Conflict between Developers and Testers in Software Development: Sources and Impact*, identified sources of the conflict between software developers and testers and assessed the impact of such conflict on software quality and job satisfaction. Zhang's research has been published in the *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *Information & Management*, *Journal of Database Management*, *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Systems Education*, and *Journal of Information Technology Management*.



and *Journal of Information Technology Management*, among others. Since he joined UNA in 2009, Zhang has published 39 peer-reviewed research papers in 22 different Information Systems (IS) related journals, 21 peer-reviewed research papers in national and international conference proceedings, and two peer-reviewed book chapters.

Zhang shares his research ideas widely, collaborating on research papers with his colleagues in the CSIS department and at a number of other universities. Zhang and his coauthors at UNA have published 10 journal papers and one conference paper. Zhang has led UNA students, both graduate and undergraduate, on several research projects. He received two Undergraduate Research Grants for Student and Faculty Teams from the Office of the Quality Enhancement Plan: one for 2015-2016, and the other for 2016-2017. Together, they have published a journal paper and a conference paper. One of their papers is currently under review at a premier IS journal, and another paper is under development.

Zhang serves as the managing editor of *The Data Base for Advances in Information Systems*, an A-level IS journal. He also serves on the editorial review board for several academic journals, including the *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Systems Education*, and *Journal of Information Technology Management*.

Zhang has served as the program co-chair, session chair, and program committee member for various national and international IS conferences and workshops. Specifically, he has served on the organizing committee for the International Research Workshop on Advances and Innovations in Software Testing since its inauguration in 2007. Zhang has served as an ad-hoc reviewer for numerous IS journals and conferences. Since 2009, he has reviewed 62 journal paper submissions and 40 conference paper submissions.

Zhang enjoys doing IS-related research, and he still gets excited whenever his paper is accepted by a journal or a conference. Outside of teaching, doing research, and providing service, anyone who knows Zhang knows that his favorite pastime is playing basketball, and one of his favorite work ethic sayings comes from that quarter: basketball superstar Michael Jordan is noted for saying that, "I'm a firm believer in goal setting. Step by step. I can't see any other way of accomplishing anything."

*"If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?"*

— Albert Einstein

# PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE



## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

### Dr. J. Douglas Barrett

*Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance, Professor of Quantitative Methods, Director of the Institute for Innovation and Economic Development*

1988, B.B.A., Finance, University of Montevallo; 1992, M.S., Applied Statistics, The University of Alabama; 1995, Ph.D., Applied Statistics, The University of Alabama

Dr. Barrett said, "I reject the concept of silos, whether across academic disciplines or faculty achievement categories (such as teaching, research, service, and advising). My scholarship regularly crosses many traditional academic disciplines, and I take the same approach with regard to service.

Teaching, research, and service are not simply complementary, but intersecting parts of the faculty function.

"Why are we here? Specifically, why does the University of North Alabama exist? In my view, we exist to serve our students as well as other constituencies that may benefit from our expertise. These include the community (both local and at large), existing and potential employers, and our professional groups. Any endeavors benefitting our constituencies are important for the long-term well-being of the University.

"We provide service to the campus community and beyond. The University, community, and profession each gave us great opportunities, and service offers a way to give back in each case. Serving on campus committees provides service to the University, but also offers opportunities to meet and connect with faculty across campus. The resulting relationships manifest in new curriculum initiatives, grant opportunities, team-teaching, interdisciplinary student research,

etc. My university service includes serving on and chairing numerous search committees, the Faculty Senate (including the Executive Committee and Faculty Affairs Committee), the General Education Work Group (including chairing), as a certified Title IX investigator, on boards of university centers, and as the Director of the Institute for Innovation and Economic Development.

"Analogously, community service benefits the Shoals area directly, but also offers the chance to meet and interact with many people in the area. These relationships often result in increased internship opportunities for students, as well as new engagement with faculty. Our work in Shoals Shift has been especially fruitful in this area.

"Service to the profession is crucial for growth within your discipline and connecting with colleagues outside your region. In 1999, Jim Couch and I founded the Society for Business, Industry, and Economics, a multidisciplinary organization. In addition to having an annual academic

meeting for faculty and students, we publish the Journal of Business, Industry, and Economics. Hundreds of university students have attended and presented research at SOBIE, including over one hundred UNA students. We celebrated our 19th meeting in April 2017."

Barrett received his Ph.D. in Applied Statistics, with specialties in statistical process control, engineering statistics, and industrial statistics. He is a senior member of the American Society for Quality and the American Economic Association. Barrett has published numerous articles and reviews in journals such as *Technometrics*, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *IIE Transactions*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Human Relations*, and *Public Finance Review*, among many others. Barrett recently published a chapter in the book *Economics of the National Football League*, and has contributed to the publications of numerous books and other instructional materials and monographs. In addition to economic development publications, Barrett has also worked on a variety of funded economic impact studies. He has delivered economic impact analysis studies to numerous entities, including the City of Florence, Huntsville Housing Authority, Shoals Economic Development Authority, Regional Care Hospital Partners, and the University of North Alabama. Outside the office, Barrett's hobbies include writing fiction, swimming, walking, college football, and traveling.

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."*  
– Mahatma Gandhi

## DR. LARRY J. NELSON OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

### Dr. Sarah L. Franklin

Associate Professor of History

1999, B.A., History, Auburn University; 2003, M.A., History, Florida State University; 2006, Ph.D., History, Florida State University

In 2010, Sarah Franklin returned to her native Alabama after a decade away. Growing up in Selma, she early on discovered that the books in her local public library could take her far beyond the confines of a small Southern town. As an associate professor of history, she shares her love of books and the knowledge within them with the students she is fortunate to instruct.

At UNA, she teaches a wide variety of courses, ranging from undergraduate freshman courses in U.S. history to graduate seminars in her research area of Latin American history. She particularly enjoys her freshman-level courses for as she says, "There is something special about the first day of class for newly-arrived freshman. They are excited, no matter how 'cool' they try to be. And that excitement is contagious." Additionally, she offers a wide variety of online courses, including upper division courses in Latin American history and the history of slavery. Online teaching requires a different skill set from the ones she has honed in the traditional classroom and it has allowed her to work with and learn



from outstanding teachers all over campus.

Franklin believes it is a privilege to teach at UNA. "There is very little more rewarding than working with young people who have a thirst for education," she said. "They know that UNA is their ticket to a new, better life. And we get to be part of that transformation."

Franklin joined UNA's faculty in 2010 and was the recipient of the University Research Award in 2014. In 2015–2016, she was honored to serve as president of UNA's Faculty Senate. This year, she returned to the classroom as a freshman herself, enrolling in introductory German, something she calls a humbling experience, but also a fun one. She is married to Dr. Ulrich Groetsch, who is also a faculty member in the UNA Department of History.

*"You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself."*  
– Galileo Galilei

# PROFILES IN EXCELLENCE

## PHI KAPPA PHI ELEANOR P. GAUNDER **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

### Dr. Scott R. Infanger

*Associate Professor of  
Modern Foreign Languages*

2001, B.A., English and Spanish,  
University of Idaho; 2002, M.A., Portuguese,  
Vanderbilt University; 2003, M.A., Spanish,  
Vanderbilt University; 2009, Ph.D.,  
Spanish, Vanderbilt University

Dr. Scott Infanger began his career in teaching simultaneously with his study of the Spanish language at age 19 when he was called to serve a proselytizing mission in Chile for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He describes his volunteer service as a full-time missionary for two years as "a mix of a Peace Corps and study abroad with a teaching internship against a religious backdrop. While some of my friends of the same age were enhancing their university education with semester-long study abroad opportunities, or doing student-teaching internships, I took time off from my university experience to dedicate two years to full-time service for my church. I was wary that I would fall significantly behind in my education and career path, but the opposite happened." Infanger credits this experience living and working among the people in Chile as the introduction to teaching as a career choice and the foundation for his professional life.

"The focus of the work I was doing was to work with people and teach them. We taught primarily in



small groups or one on one, but during that time, I learned how to engage individuals and how to ask questions that would spark an interest in learning and require a deeper level of thinking to find an answer," he said. "This laid the foundation for my career as an educator."

After completing his missionary service in Chile, he returned to his studies and graduated from the University of Idaho with a double major in English and Spanish in 2001. He then began graduate study in Spanish at Vanderbilt University, but added Portuguese as a secondary concentration shortly thereafter.

As a graduate student at Vanderbilt University, he had the opportunity to assist with a short-term study abroad program to Cuba as a co-director, and then participate as a student in a summer-long, language-based program in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These two experiences solidified his interest in study abroad as an important element of language study and allowed him to see different styles of study abroad programs and identify the merits of each type of experience.

When he joined the faculty at UNA, like many young professors, Infanger struggled to adjust to university teaching. "I had a hard time finding my stride as a new professor. I had an idea where I wanted my classes to go and what outcomes I was hoping for with each class, but I was not confident in my ability to get them there. Through a lot of trial and error, I've found my voice and gained that confidence." Throughout all of the challenges and subsequent adjustments, Infanger focuses on serving the individual students and helping them to have the best possible educational experience in each of his classes, whether it is an introductory language class or an advanced literature class. "As I adjust my teaching style and refine my classes, I always ask myself, 'What will benefit the students the most?' and, 'How can I help each individual maximize his or her learning outcome?' These questions have helped me keep focused on what is most important and to make the necessary adjustments to my classes as the needs of the students change."

"It's a tremendous honor to receive the Phi Kappa Phi Eleanor P. Gaunder Excellence in Teaching Award. It is humbling to be recognized in this way, especially among the outstanding faculty we have here at UNA. My greatest strength as a teacher is my students. It's easy to be an excellent teacher when you have excellent students, and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have the excellent students I do."

Infanger, associate professor of Spanish, joined the faculty in the Department of Foreign Languages in August 2007. His area of specialization is in Spanish and Portuguese languages and literatures with a primary focus on Latin American literature and culture.

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# HPER SHOWS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



When it comes to diverse options, the University of North Alabama's Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation offers a wide array—from a B.S. in Sport/Recreation Management to an M.S. in Exercise Science just to name a couple. Either way, students have many options when it comes to choosing exactly what they want to study.

But that's not the only thing going for HPER. In 2016, the department worked to expand degree options, which in a short time has seen the success of both students and alumni on the rise. One such alumna also happens to be a professor at UNA, Dr. Lauren Killen.

Killen had originally planned on a different major when she enrolled at the University, with the goal of becoming a physical therapist. However, after a friend suggested she look into exercise science, her path began to change.

Although those seeking to go to physical therapy school were directed

toward exercise science at the time, Killen said she chose to go with what felt right for her, which was "a degree focused on people," with a biology minor complimenting the science in her major.

When it came time for her to find a PT school, she had a complete change of heart. Although she went through with the interview process at one university, Killen said she didn't feel like it was the place for her to be. Killen knew that she was interested in a different career path, but she wasn't sure exactly what to do.

That's when she talked with Dr. Matt Green who is also a current HPER department professor. Killen said Green encouraged her to go ahead and get her master's and maybe even her Ph.D. If she decided she wanted to go to PT school after all, having those degrees would just make her more competitive.

So she took his advice and stayed at UNA to earn a Master of Science in health and human performance.



After that, she went on to complete her Ph.D. at Middle Tennessee State University.

Although Green said that having those degrees would make her competitive for PT school, Killen said going to UNA also helped her out when it came to getting her doctoral degree. Unlike some of her peers, Killen's experience with research at UNA, along with her course content made her well prepared to be in a Ph.D. program.

"I felt very prepared as a graduate student to compete with people from an R1 school and then coming back, felt very prepared to teach and interact with other grads and undergraduate students," Killen said.

She attributes her readiness to the education she received at UNA where she said students not only receive the knowledge they need to know for their field, but the practical hands-on experience as well.

Green said student success is important, but another aspect of the



department that makes it stand out is the graduate assistant program.

Killen said she had the unique experience of being one of the department's first two GAs.

"The other was Dr. Jared Hornsby who also earned his bachelor's degree at the University of North Alabama," Killen said. "He later went on to get his Ph.D. at Alabama and is now an assistant professor at Liberty University."

UNA may be a smaller school compared to some, but it is making positive impacts on students, and Green said people all across the country are recognizing this in the HPER department. Even when competing with those from larger schools, "students from this university stand out."

But how is word spreading exactly? Both Green and Killen agree that the best advertisement is students going out and telling others about their experience at UNA.

One way Green said this is done is by encouraging prospective students to take a tour of campus. When they do, he said he ensures that other current graduate students are there to take them around and answer their questions, specifically without any professors present.

"This way, future students are more apt to ask questions they wouldn't otherwise and current students can answer more honestly," he said.

## UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

### B.S.Ed. in Physical Education P-12 (Teacher Certification)

### B.S. in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

- Fitness Management
- Health Promotion

### B.S. in Exercise Science

- Applied Exercise Physiology
- Clinical Exercise Physiology
- Pre-Professional Studies

### B.S. in Sport and Recreation Management

- Recreation
- Sport Management

### Graduate Majors

- M.A.Ed. P-12 Physical Education (Class A Certification)

### M.S. in Health and Human Performance

- Exercise Science
- Kinesiology
- Wellness and Health Promotion
- Integrative Health
- Sport Management



# CONNECT1

## CONNECTING PEOPLE

For many college students, the time period between the ages of 18 and 22 represent the best years of their lives. Newfound freedoms, coming of age tales of soul searching through successes and failures are joined with life-long friends and limited amounts of actual responsibilities to create a care-free environment. It is also a time for learning, being introduced to new ideas and philosophies and pursuing personal and professional dreams.

A disturbing statistic, however, is beginning to shed light on the fact that a growing number of students across the United States are struggling to cope with the added academic, social, and even athletic



stresses encountered in a college environment.

The national suicide rate among 15- to 24-year-olds has increased steadily since 2007: from 9.6 deaths per 100,000 to 11.1, in 2013. Suicide is the second most common killer of university students in America (surpassed only by vehicular accidents). It's estimated that 1.5 students out of every 100 will attempt to commit suicide at some

point during their college career. Depression is cited as a major factor, as well as anxiety. Suicide rates among college students have increased by 200 percent since the 1950s.

These numbers caught the attention of UNA Director of Athletics Mark Linder, and his first thought was, "Maybe we can help."

After meeting with the Director of Student Counseling Services, Lynne Martin, and setting up a committee to assess the potential problem on the UNA campus, Connect1 was born.

The program is designed to encourage face-to-face interaction. Its goal is to decrease suicidal thoughts and actions, isolation, and depression



caused by the advancement of technology and use of social media.

"I was reading an article on some of the negative impacts technology is having on social issues involving students," said Linder. "I sent it to Lynne Martin and asked her opinion on the accuracy of the article and if it was relevant on our campus. She replied that it was absolutely true and the impacts from such issues were already becoming a factor right here on our campus.

"I asked what could we do to help. We felt that we could make a difference through our platform as an athletic department. Society has made athletics important, so it creates a great opportunity to do something positive."

After naming the new organization "Connect1" the committee, made up of several members of the UNA athletics staff, came up with the phrase "You are more than a 'Like'!"

Research continues to show that technology and social media

are weakening the abilities of young people to create interpersonal relationships, which is increasing isolation and suicide rates among the age group. Goals of Connect1 include decreasing suicidal thoughts and actions, decreasing the percentage of reported bullying/abuse on campus, and increasing awareness of negative impact of social media and technology on interpersonal relationships. Other goals include increasing friendliness on campus, retention, and enrollment.

"It doesn't take much to say something nice to people," Linder added.

Since the program was introduced, more than 30,000 people have been reached through campus events and social media campaigns.

One of the reasons for the program's increase in popularity has been Kyle Conkle.

A former baseball player for the Lions, Conkle worked as a graduate assistant in the UNA athletic department before being hired as an





assistant for game operations and special events. He is now the primary contact for Connect1, scheduling meetings, writing content and organizing events.

"If this program helps one person in terms of psychological well-being, confidence in identity and value, or even prevents an individual from taking drastic measures, it's worth the effort," said Conkle. "We have already seen how this program has impacted individuals and we believe the unseen impact Connect1 has had on this community is even greater."

Along with campus interaction, Connect1 has also produced seven

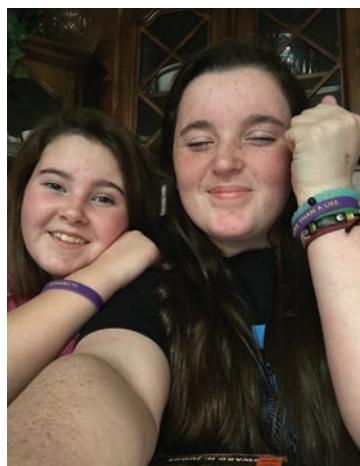
videos highlighting services the organization provides and how it relates to everyday campus life.

On July 26, Conkle was a session speaker at the Gulf South Conference Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) meetings in Birmingham. He presented Connect1 to the other 13 member schools in the league with the hope of establishing charter clubs at each institution. The color format for the Connect1 logo was also altered to match each school's colors.

"Kyle has really taken Connect1 and run with it," Linder said. "He has a passion for it and has done a wonderful job. He has worked with

Eddy Forsythe (UNA athletics video coordinator) and has put together some great videos. They strive to have an impact on the lives of others. Hopefully, this will become a far-reaching program."

Connect1 has already begun to make an impact beyond the University of North Alabama campus. UNA was one of 24 Division II schools named as a finalist for the NCAA's 2017 Division II Award of Excellence. The accolade recognizes positive campus and community engagement events hosted during the past year. Each year, the Division II committee selects one





finalist from each conference to be recognized for events that exemplify any of the six Division II attributes: Learning, Balance, Resourcefulness, Sportsmanship, Passion, and Service. Because of Connect1, UNA was selected to represent the Gulf South Conference.

While Connect1 continues to grow beyond the University, campus engagement remains a priority. The group has partnered with other organizations for events that continue to raise awareness. In March, Connect1 partnered with the UNA Student Government Association for "Hey Day." The effort to reach out to students in need of positive interaction or simply a friendly conversation was considered a huge success.

Later in the same month, Connect1 also partnered with Active Minds, a nonprofit organization that

empowers students to speak openly about mental health in order to educate others and encourage help-seeking. The two groups organized a "Send Silence Packing" event, featuring 1,100 backpacks placed over the UNA campus. The number of backpacks symbolized the number of college students who take their own lives each year in the United States.

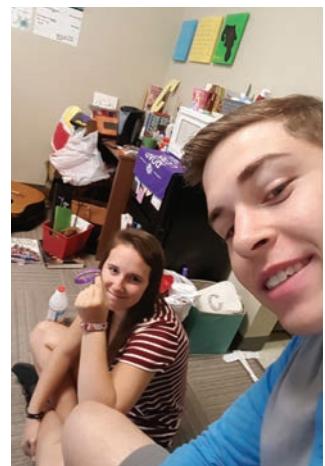
While the popularity of Connect1 is growing, the need to reach students is still there. A survey of college counseling centers has found that more than half their clients have severe psychological problems, an increase of 13 percent in just two years. Anxiety and depression, in that order, are now the most common mental health diagnoses among college students, according to the Center for Collegiate Mental Health at Penn State.

Students, according to the

American College Health Association, turn to suicide because of situational anxiety and stress about school, the economy, their finances, or family issues. Often, students coming from high school to college don't have the coping skills they need to deal with an increased workload or social stress. In other cases, they may have a history of mental illness that exacerbates the suicidal feelings.

Many colleges and universities have mental health facilities, but students may feel uncomfortable about asking for help. What's more, mental health facilities at colleges can be overburdened, rendering them less able to meet student needs.

For more information about getting involved with Connect1, call 256-630-2707 or email rconkle@una.edu.





2017 Honorees Dr. Robert Khayat (Mississippi), Dr. Stacey Johnson (San Jose State), Stephanie White (Purdue), Heather O'Reilly (North Carolina), Dr. Rachel Price Bell '00 (North Alabama) and Dick Enberg

## ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICA® HALL OF FAME

### Rachel Price Bell '00

Former University of North Alabama volleyball All-American and Academic All-America® **Rachel Price Bell '00** was inducted into the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-America® Hall

of Fame in June as part of a four-member class.

Created in 1988, the CoSIDA Academic All-America® Hall of Fame recognizes former Academic All-Americans who received a college degree at least

10 years ago and have achieved lifetime success in their professional careers. The four new inductees joined the prestigious 142-members Academic All-America® Hall of Fame from more than 26,000 all-time Academic All-America® selections.

Price Bell becomes the first Academic All-America® Hall of Fame inductee from a Gulf South

Conference school and the first inductee from a school in Alabama.

A four-year starter on University of North Alabama volleyball teams from 1996-99, Price Bell helped put UNA volleyball on the national map, leading the Lions to a 156-22 record, four consecutive Gulf South Conference championships, and four straight NCAA Division II Tournament appearances—which included two NCAA regional championships. In addition to her numerous career honors, she has been inducted into the UNA Athletic Hall of Fame and the Gulf South Conference Hall of Fame. She and her twin sister Ronda were named as the Gulf South Conference's top female student-athletes for the 40th Anniversary of the NCAA Division II.

Following her graduation from the University, Price earned a Ph.D. in biomedical engineering from Purdue University. The clinical scientist is currently employed as a clinical project manager in West Lafayette, Indiana, coordinating studies for new medical devices.





Brock Beck '04, Todd Vardaman '90, Debbie Williams '91, Jeff Hodges '82, Megan Lovelace, and Mark Linder

## UNA Athletics' Hodges Presented With 2017 ARCH WARD AWARD

University of North Alabama Assistant Athletic Director for Communication **Jeff Hodges '82** was the recipient of the 2017 Arch Ward Award by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). The award is named for Ward, who was sports editor of the Chicago Tribune from 1930 until he died in 1955.

CoSIDA is comprised of more than 3,000 intercollegiate athletic communications and media relations professionals from colleges, universities, and athletic conferences at all divisions of competition in the United States and Canada.

Hodges, in his 34th year serving as the chief communications officer for the UNA athletic department, was honored with CoSIDA's oldest and most prestigious award at CoSIDA's 60th annual convention at the Orlando Marriott World Center. Hodges is just the second recipient from a non-Division I institution to receive the honor.

The Arch Ward Award has been presented annually since 1958 to a CoSIDA member who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of college sports information, and who by his or her activities, has brought dignity and prestige to the profession.

Shelly Poe, Auburn assistant athletic director for Media Relations, said she nominated Hodges for the award because "He truly cares about the student-athletes and teams that he works with. Jeff goes above and beyond to make sure their stories have a voice in the bigger narrative of UNA and of college athletics. He loves that university and the people who are associated with it, and that connection shows in all of his work."

"Beyond his exemplary output at UNA, he has also served our national organization for two decades as our secretary," said Poe, "providing great communication and service to our 3,000+ members."

Poe said the Arch Ward Award traditionally goes to SIDs at the nation's largest schools, "so this is a testament to how all our members feel about Jeff and his professional contributions."

A Decatur, Alabama, native, Hodges has helped promote six national championship teams at UNA, hundreds of all-conference and All-American student athletes, and two Harlon Hill Trophy winners. He has worked at both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, and he is a long-time member of the Board of Directors of CoSIDA.

He's also been the recipient of numerous CoSIDA awards, including the Warren Berg Award, the President's Award, and the CoSIDA 25-Year. Hodges has also been inducted into the CoSIDA Hall of Fame and serves as the board's national secretary. Hodges' 18 years on the board is the third longest board tenure in the organization's history.

# 2017 FALL ATHLETIC SCHEDULES

## FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
<b>AUGUST</b>			
31 Thursday	TEXAS A&M-COMMERCE	HOME	6:00 p.m.
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
16 Saturday	* at Valdosta State GSC Broadcast on ESPN3	Valdosta, Ga.	6:00 p.m.
23 Saturday	* WEST ALABAMA	HOME	6:00 p.m.
30 Saturday	* at West Georgia	Carrollton, Ga.	1:00 p.m.
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
7 Saturday	* FLORIDA TECH HOMECOMING	HOME	6:00 p.m.
14 Saturday	* at Shorter	Rome, Ga.	12:00 p.m.
21 Saturday	at Central Washington	Ellensburg, Wash.	3:00 p.m.
28 Saturday	* DELTA STATE	HOME	6:00 p.m.
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
4 Saturday	* at West Florida GSC Broadcast on ESPN3	Pensacola, Fla.	4:00 p.m.
11 Saturday	* MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE PREVIEW DAY	HOME	1:30 p.m.
18 Saturday	NCAA Division II Playoffs	Round 1	TBA
25 Saturday	NCAA Division II Playoffs	Round 2	TBA
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
2 Saturday	NCAA Division II Playoffs	Quarterfinals	TBA
9 Saturday	NCAA Division II Playoffs	Semifinals	TBA
16 Saturday	NCAA Division II Playoffs - Championship Game - Kansas City, Kan.	Championship Game - Kansas City, Kan.	

## SOCCER SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
<b>AUGUST</b>			
26 Saturday	at Trevecca Nazarene (Exhibition)	Nashville, Tenn.	3:00 p.m.
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
1 Friday	at Nova Southeastern	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.	6:00 p.m.
3 Sunday	at Barry	Miami Shores, Fla.	10:00 a.m.
8 Friday	* CHRISTIAN BROTHERS	HOME	7:00 p.m.
10 Sunday	* UNION	HOME	1:00 p.m.
15 Friday	* at Auburn Montgomery	Montgomery, Ala.	7:00 p.m.
17 Sunday	* at Montevallo	Montevallo, Ala.	1:00 p.m.
22 Friday	* at Alabama Huntsville	Huntsville, Ala.	7:00 p.m.
24 Sunday	* at West Alabama	Livingston, Ala.	1:00 p.m.
29 Friday	* SHORTER	HOME	7:00 p.m.
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
1 Sunday	* LEE	HOME	1:00 p.m.
6 Friday	* DELTA STATE	HOME	7:00 p.m.
8 Sunday	* MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE	HOME	1:00 p.m.
13 Friday	* at Valdosta State	Valdosta, Ga.	4:00 p.m.
15 Sunday	* at West Florida	Pensacola, Fla.	12:30 p.m.
20 Friday	ALBANY STATE	HOME	5:00 p.m.
22 Sunday	* SPRING HILL <i>SENIOR NIGHT</i>	HOME	1:00 p.m.
26 Thursday	* at West Georgia	Carrollton, Ga.	Noon
31 Tuesday	GSC Tournament - Quarterfinal	TBA	TBA
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
3 Friday	GSC Tournament - Semifinal	#1 Seed	TBA
5 Sunday	GSC Tournament - Final	#1 Seed	TBA

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## VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>			
1-2	Hampton Inn-Invitational	Pensacola, Fla.	
1	Southwest Minnesota State University		9:00 a.m.
1	University of Southern Indiana		2:00 p.m.
2	Wheeling Jesuit		11:30 a.m.
2	South Carolina Aiken		6:00 p.m.
8-9	Dunn Hospitality Invitational	Evansville, Ind.	
8	Cedarville University		11:30 a.m.
8	Northwood University		4:30 p.m.
9	Purdue University Northwest		11:30 a.m.
9	University of Southern Indiana		7:00 p.m.
12	ALCORN STATE	HOME	6:00 p.m.
15-16	UNA Classic	HOME	
15	UNIVERSITY OF AUBURN-MONTGOMERY		3:00 p.m.
16	TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY		3:00 p.m.
16	UNIVERSITY OF WEST ALABAMA		7:00 p.m.
19	LEE UNIVERSITY	HOME	6:00 p.m.
22	UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA	HOME	5:00 p.m.
23	VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY	HOME	1:00 p.m.
26	University of West Georgia	Carrollton, Ga.	EST - 6:00 p.m.
29	UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA-HUNTSVILLE	HOME	7:00 p.m.
<b>OCTOBER</b>			
3	SHORTER UNIVERSITY	HOME	
7	University of Auburn-Montgomery	Montgomery, Ala.	2:00 p.m.
10	University of West Florida	Pensacola, Fla.	5:00 p.m.
13-14	South Region Crossover		TBA
17	University of Montevallo	Montevallo, Ala.	7:00 p.m.
20	Union University	HOME	7:00 p.m.
21	Christian Brothers University	HOME	1:00 p.m.
27	Mississippi College	Clinton, Miss.	6:00 p.m.
29	University of West Alabama	Livingston, Ala.	1:00 p.m.
<b>NOVEMBER</b>			
3	Christian Brothers University	Memphis, Tenn.	7:00 p.m.
4	Union University	Jackson, Tenn.	2:00 p.m.
7	University of Alabama Huntsville	Huntsville, Ala.	7:00 p.m.
11	MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE	HOME	1:00 p.m.
17	Gulf South Conference Tournament		TBA
30	NCAA Regional Tournament		TBA
<b>DECEMBER</b>			
7	NCAA Elite Eight		TBA

## CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE

DATE	HOST/EVENT	LOCATION
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		
8 Friday	at Kennesaw State Invitational	Cartersville, Ga.
16 Saturday	at Rhodes College Invitational	Memphis, Tenn.
30 Saturday	Greater Louisville Classic	Louisville, Ky.
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
7 Saturday	Watson Ford Invitational	Clinton, Miss.
21 Saturday	Gulf South Conference	Danville, Ala.
<b>NOVEMBER</b>		
4 Saturday	NCAA Division II Regionals	Lakeland, Fla.
18 Saturday	NCAA Division II Championships	Evansville, Ind.

\* Gulf South Conference • Games All Times Central

# message from the ALUMNI PRESIDENT



Dear University of North Alabama  
Alumni and Friends,

The past year I've spent serving as your alumni president has been an active and exciting one.

In December, the University announced plans to move toward Division I athletics as part of the Atlantic SUN conference, and, as alumni, we're supporting the move by providing a new line of drinking cups at athletic events beginning in January. The move has been a long time coming, and, from the alumni perspective, it's a positive change.

Just before that announcement, the alumni, thanks to our first Annual Day of Giving, were able to retire our debt associated with the dining area of the Science and Technology Building. Being able to do this was a highlight of the year as it was clear that,

when called upon to act for UNA and its future, we rise to the task. I feel certain we'll launch a future campaign that will allow us to continue to support the university that gave so much to us as undergraduates.

We also enjoyed gathering for our annual summit in April where we met new faces and discussed new ways to energize UNA alumni clubs across the Southeast, throughout the United States, and even in other countries. We got updates on the progress of our comprehensive campaign from Vice President for University Advancement Dr. Debbie Shaw, and we learned about freshman class size projections from Ron Patterson, Chief Enrollment Officer.

We're already looking ahead to the next Lions under the Lights, the special annual event that showcases the Culinary Department as well as the beautiful UNA campus. That event is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 20. If you haven't attended this event in the past, I encourage you to do so. You won't soon forget the food or the fun of dining under the stars in such a magical setting.

In my role as your president, it's been my privilege to represent you at commencement in the spring and winter. I take that opportunity to remind graduating seniors that, yes, in fact, it's time for them to join our ranks and become connected in the network that is 70,000-strong and growing with each class that crosses the stage.

It's been exciting, to say the least. I've enjoyed each moment, and I'm looking forward to supporting Aaron Irons as he takes the helm in the weeks to come.

For me, it seems the year has come and gone in an instant. My sincerest thanks for your ongoing support of the alumni association and its initiatives. It takes each one of us, contributing in our own way, to make it work.

One thing that hasn't changed, however, is how much I love UNA! I'm forever grateful for my time as an undergraduate as well as for my service as the alumni association president.

Roar Lions!

**Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96**

2016-2017 Alumni Association President

## UNA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Michelle Eubanks '96, President  
Aaron Irons '99, President Elect  
Derrick Chatman '08, Vice President  
Bishop Alexander '09, 2nd Vice President  
Christa Raney '97, Secretary  
Raleigh Green '10, Treasurer  
Pat Burney '88, Club Advisor  
Pat Roden '77, Faculty Advisor  
Douglas Hargett '02, Past President  
Haley Brink '08, Director of Alumni Relations

## UNA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gloria Aday '70  
Bucky Beaver '64  
Bart Black '95  
Mark Blackburn '75  
Andy Betterton '75  
Tosha-Paige Brewer '13  
Robbie Burdine '12  
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Larry Softley '89  
Elaine Softley '88  
Katherine Fowler Stone '02  
Linda Vaughan '70  
Maria Warren '00  
Kim West '08  
Cheron Pitts White '98

## UNA ALUMNI CLUB LEADERS ALABAMA

Auburn/Opelika • James Langcuster '82  
Athens • Holly Holliman '96  
Montgomery/SE Alabama • April Curtis Hartsfield '00  
Birmingham • Chris Burrell '02  
Colbert/Sheffield • Elaine Witt '76  
Decatur • Patrick Johnson '99  
Florence • Ryan '01 and Lisa Clayton '00  
Huntsville • Laurentis Barnett '03  
Russellville • Heath Daily  
Scottsboro • Stan Mannon '85  
Tuscaloosa • Jim Page '01

## TENNESSEE

Memphis • Coleman Barron '14  
Nashville • Jamie Moorer Ellis '08  
South Central Tennessee • Mac '72 and Cathy Brown '76

## FLORIDA

Jacksonville • Maury Shipper '78, Janet Price '77  
Orlando • Lawrence Davis '80

## GEORGIA

Atlanta • Carnette Johnson '83  
South Georgia • Toby Davis '80

## MISSISSIPPI

Jackson • Ethan Broadfoot '11  
Northeast Mississippi • Keith Henley '89  
East Central • Michael Thorn '82  
Coastal Mississippi • Rita Buckley '85

## TEXAS

Dallas Metroplex • Paul Smith '66  
Houston • Tommy McNeill '69  
West Texas • Charles Inman '71

## YOUNG ALUMNI LEADERS

Bishop Alexander '09

## GEOGRAPHY

Robert Nall '14

## SOCIAL WORK

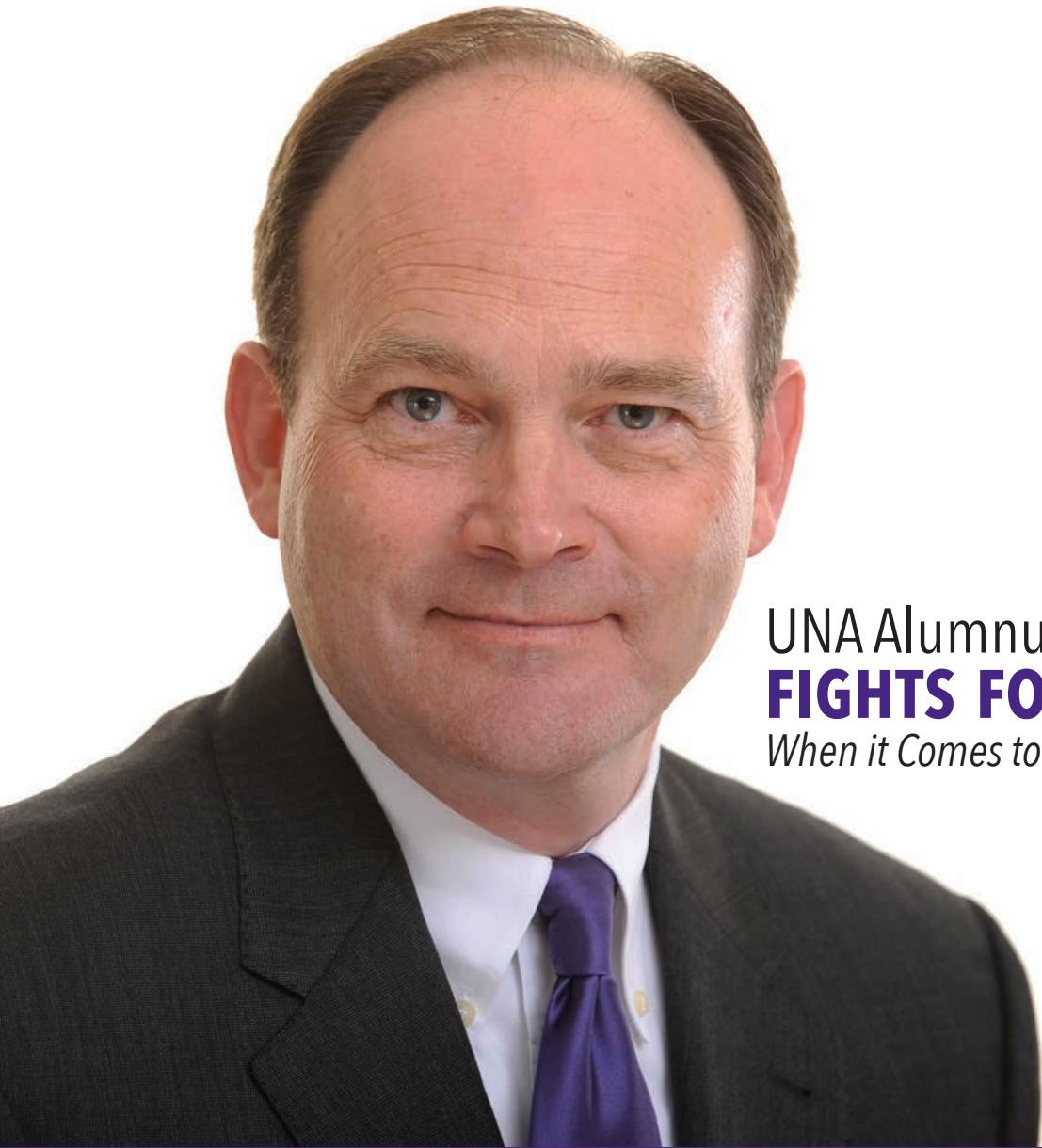
Stacy Lee '01

## UNA BAND

Jeff McCreary '83

## ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Katie Swann '14



## UNA Alumnus **FIGHTS FOR ALL RIGHTS**

*When it Comes to Diversity and Inclusion*

**Notable awards include:** the Florida Bar G. Kirk Haas Humanitarian Award, 2016; the Florida Bar Young Lawyer Division Diversity Award, 2016; the Defense Research Institute Sheryl J. Willert Pioneer Diversity Award, 2015; the Litigation Counsel of America's Inaugural Peter Perlman Service Award, 2015; the American Bar Association Section of Litigation Diversity Leadership Award, 2013; and the Florida Bar Henry Latimer Diversity Award, 2013.

On a daily basis, UNA alumnus **Larry Smith '79** defends American and global companies in complex, high-exposure personal injury cases throughout Florida and the Southeast; his clients range from small businesses to Fortune 10 companies.

However, another topic that Smith works on daily is diversity and inclusion.

Smith is passionate about inclusion. He was the first openly gay attorney asked to address the Florida Bar Association on diversity issues. He assisted in the development of the first training manual on diversity sensitivity, and served on the Florida Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism.

Smith recently answered some questions regarding diversity and its current role in society.

# Q&A

## What does the word diversity mean to you?

An appreciation that people do not all come in the same size, color, shape or mold. Instead, our strength and success is enhanced by contributions from different backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, interests and abilities, and that because of those differences, not despite them, we are collectively made better. This is the essence of inclusion: bringing differences together to make things better, stronger and more beautiful. Imagine going to a symphony where only one kind of instrument was played.

## Do you think that definition matches the current definition most people have of diversity?

Too many people still feel that diversity is a code name for forced tolerance. This leads to resistance and intolerance.

## What is your motivation to fight for diversity? Why is this so important to you?

Our founders declared it self-evident that all people are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, among them, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That promise of equality belongs to every single American, inherently and in equal measure. It is a cornerstone upon which our entire nation is based. Indeed, some of America's greatest achievements—individually and as a nation—have only been found

when we have allowed individuals to emerge from the confines of a homogenous majority and add different perspectives. So, when I see intolerance or bigotry based on characteristics other than character, my conscience and integrity compel me to speak out against it.

## In your line of work, do you think the idea of diversity is becoming more important?

There are plenty of studies which support the conclusion that diversity improves outcomes in almost every situation. It is a professional and business imperative. It is also a simple application of the Golden Rule. In an increasingly diverse global exchange of ideas, products, and services, failure to recognize diversity is a recipe for failure.

## How has the climate related to it changed in the law profession over the years?

Slowly, but steadily. Law is slow, but lawyers are taught to listen, analyze, think, and then act. Speaking and writing has been my way of helping my colleagues understand the importance of diversity and inclusion.

## What type of hurdles do you have to overcome in practicing law, while also striving for diversity?

Stereotypes, prejudice, and the need to overachieve simply to prove my ability.

## When it comes to practicing law and the current political climate of our country, do you see more of an emphasis on diversity?

Every generation, every profession, and every person has the opportunity to further divide people based on our differences or unite them through the things we have in common.

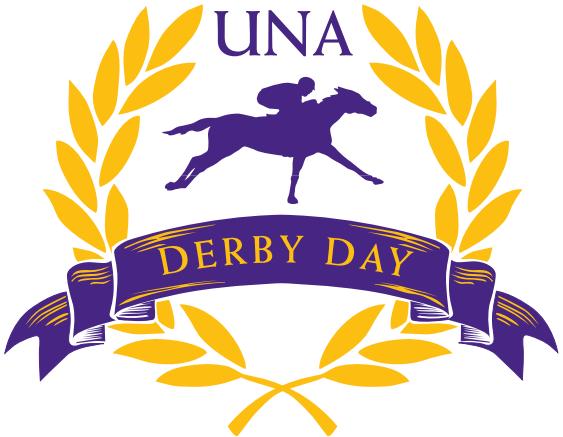
## When most people think of diversity they often think in terms of people's skin color; how do we get people to understand that diversity goes far beyond that?

Remember, "... God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Not all differences are visible like skin color—religion, culture, and sexual orientation, for example, are inextricable from a person's heart.

Smith obtained his B.S. from the University of North Alabama in 1979 and his J.D. from the University of Alabama in 1984. He recently addressed the International Association of Defense Counsel at its annual conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, in February 2017 on the impact of the Orlando nightclub shooting on the LGBT community.



Sybil Cleveland '84 and Dr. Debbie Shaw '82



Julie Riedel, Jean McIntyre, and Blair Riedel



Joel Andrews, Jill Andrews, Harold Lewis, Jan Ingle, Brian Ingle, and Tricia Lewis



Dr. Ken Kitts, Dena Kitts, June Strickland, Colin and Corbin Kitts

Saturday, May 6, represented the fifth annual event UNA Derby Day, which serves as an opportunity for the campus and community to gather in a social setting to share the excitement of the Kentucky Derby and its cultural connection to the area, all while benefiting the UNA Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of donors, the UNA foundation was able to raise more than \$120,000 from the event.

This year one of the primary focuses of the Derby Day coordinators was to work with as many local businesses as possible to bring new, unique features to the event. For the first time, UNA Derby Day incorporated a craft beer tasting station courtesy of Singin' River Brewery, mint juleps created by Brian Lovejoy of Odette, and catering by Alan Phillips of Red Clay Epicurean with assistance from the UNA Culinary students.

This year's Premier Sponsor was, once again, the Coby Cares Foundation. Established by the Brubaker family, who also donated Coby Hall to UNA, the Coby Cares Foundation's mission and efforts are to support children facing numerous challenges. For more information on the Coby Cares Foundation, visit: [cobycaresfoundation.org/](http://cobycaresfoundation.org/).

This event would certainly not be successful without the support of the Shoals community through sponsorships, silent auction donations, other in-kind gifts, and attendance.

Please plan to attend the sixth annual **UNA Derby Day** on **Saturday, May 5, 2018!**



# University of NORTH ALABAMA Makes Chronicle of Higher Ed List of Private Gifts

*Thanks to  
McKinney Donation*

The University of North Alabama was listed among some impressive company, ranking No. 57 on the Chronicle of Higher Education's list: *Recent Private Gifts to Higher Education* (May 2017).

The ranking came in response to a \$1 million gift made by brothers Joe McKinney and Chester McKinney Jr., in honor of their late mother and UNA alumna, Connie D. McKinney.

Dr. Deborah Shaw, UNA's vice president for University Advancement, said making the Chronicle of Higher Ed's list is something to truly be proud of.

"We're lucky to have such wonderful donors who understand how transformative their gifts are to our institution," Shaw said. "What made their gift so unique, and others on the list, was that it was an outright gift, not paid in several years over installments, which is typical and expected for most large gifts," she said.

Additional gifts that come in will support what is now known as the Connie D. McKinney Department of Human Sciences, Hospitality, and Design.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, gifts and biographical information were compiled from news articles, news releases, and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*'s database of charitable gifts. Only gifts of \$1 million or more in a given year are included in the database. The value of gifts is based on information from institutions or donors at the time the gifts were promised or received.





# Water, Water, EVERWHERE

Just a few years ago, if you asked someone what the Shoals was known for, their response was probably going to be "music." Today, their answer might be a little different. While music is definitely still a part of our area's identity (and always will be), a growing community of business people are coming to the area because of the up-and-coming tech sector. They want the Shoals to be known for innovation, for community, for helpfulness, and for being a safe and worthwhile place for startup companies to base themselves.

**Robbie Hillis '96** is one of these business people who wants to change the culture of, as he puts it, "that you live here, but you don't do much business here." A UNA graduate and entrepreneur, Hillis is the founder of The Ark Labs, a startup based in Florence that has already made an impact in the world of environmental science and sustainability with its flagship, water-monitoring product, DRiY.

DRiY alerts users to unusual water activity in their homes or businesses.



On first impression, this is not a sexy idea for a product. It is not an Apple Watch or iPhone. It's definitely not the wheel or sliced bread. But it is an underdeveloped market that is desperately in need of development. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that water leaks alone waste approximately 1 trillion gallons of water each year in the United States. To put that in perspective, that is over 260 million swimming pools worth of water.

And that's just leaks. DRiY is designed to not only track leaks, but also monitor unusual activity, such as faucets being left on, which was the impetus for the whole project: Hillis' young daughter left a faucet running in their basement for over fourteen hours, and while their home was

luckily spared damage, their wallets were not. Nor was the environment. In the fourteen hours the faucet gushed water, approximately 2,000 gallons of water were wasted.

That accident was a catalyst for The Ark Labs' creation. Hillis, always the businessman, saw a fantastic opportunity for a new product, one that would lower utility costs and prevent waste on small and large scales alike. Whether in a home like his or in a commercial setting like a factory or hotel, Hillis wants to use the product to prevent situations like the one he and his family experienced—and to make a dent in those trillion gallons of waste each year.

"We've been around the world with this product. I was in Thailand [recently] and Portugal. We got invited to New York City Tech Day. It's been awhile since I was at a water event because I've been spending time at tech events," said Hillis. That's because while the concept of DRiY is based in water conservation, the product itself is an incredibly technical piece of equipment.



While monitoring water usage may sound like a simple task, the reality is anything but. It works by combining specialty hardware and software to analyze your house or business's typical water routines. The unit itself is installed alongside your pipes, and after a calibration period during which the Ark Labs learns your typical consumption, any time there is an anomaly, you will get an alert notifying you of the potential issue.

For instance, Hillis said that he "was watching the data, and the developers were looking into things, and I saw that a customer who bought the first run of the product was spiking, and I thought 'that's a lot of water...should I text him or something?' And the developer said that he had already received his message and ignored it. Which means the system is working. We're really proud of that."

Hillis says that he is also proud to have the opportunity to have The Arks Labs based in the Shoals. Beyond the amazing talent he has been able to recruit from UNA through internships and graduates

and recommendations, the location is unique in how well-connected it is to the rest of the country. "Because of Boutique Air, I can have a meeting in Ft. Lauderdale or San Francisco in the morning and be home that very same night. It may not be a fun trip, but it's possible. I've done it, and I can still go to Publix, pick up something, and still cook dinner that night. I've done that. That's sort of what we're wanting to do; our company is different."

The Ark Labs has already created exciting new jobs right here in Florence, and Hillis has brought in interns from universities around the state (as well as UNA), giving current students and graduates an opportunity to work in an environment once limited to larger areas of the country. With the recently launched eCommerce shop, Hillis is ready to get DRiY into the hands of consumers everywhere. Though Hillis is aiming the product at commercial customers such as hotels, condominiums, and factories, it very much has a place in private homes, too. Hillis says that they are doing everything they can so that the product will pay for itself

within 14-16 months, a reasonable timeframe within reach of most homeowners.

Using strategies he learned while attending UNA and that he has perfected over the past two decades as an entrepreneur, Hillis is using every tool available to him to make the Ark Labs a success. He has angel investors and agreements with venture capitalists. Ark Labs has progressed through startup accelerators, and Hillis has even run a successful crowdfunding Kickstarter campaign to get the product into the hands of consumers.

None of which would have been possible without Hillis having been an alumnus of the class of 1996. Over the years, he has maintained contact with classmates and professors to have a full professional network to help build his brands. Partnering with the Shoals Chamber of Commerce and being heavily involved in the Shoals Entrepreneurial Center, as well as working with numerous technology groups, Hillis and Ark Labs are set to be a cornerstone in the tech sector popping up in the Shoals.



# CLASS NOTES

## YEARS UNIDENTIFIED

**Rickita Pride** and her husband, Cedric, created their own custom neckwear line called C.PRIDE. This neckwear line has been a success for the Prides, carrying out orders not only all over the U.S., but also internationally. Rickita received a business degree from UNA.

## FACULTY AND STAFF

**Greg Carnes** has taken on the role of Chair of the Shoals Chamber of Commerce. Carnes is serving UNA as dean of UNA's College of Business as well as a professor of accounting.

**Roy Stevens**, the namesake of Stevens Hall, was reunited with the airplane he had flown in June 1945 on his squadron's last two combat missions of World War II. After the war, Stevens returned to serve UNA as a business professor and retired as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Model A Fords (1928-1931). Higgins graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. While in school, he was involved in ROTC.

### Evelyn Hope Lawhorn

'56 was honored by the Alpha Delta Kappa Pi Chapter of local women in education for being the organization's sole surviving founder. Alpha Delta Kappa Pi is celebrating their 60 year anniversary. Lawhorn graduated from college and then started teaching in Boldo during World War II.

## 19 70s

### Patty Hughes '76 and Sally O'Bannon '76

brought Frances Hodgson Burnett's A Little Princess to the stage as director and music director, respectively. Hughes graduated with a bachelor's in English and O'Bannon graduated with a bachelor's in music.

**David Bethea '77** was inducted into the Alabama High School Athletic Association's Hall of Fame. Bethea has been Montgomery Academy's boys tennis coach since 1985 and serves as department chair of physical education for the Montgomery Academy. Bethea graduated with a Bachelor of Science.

**Debbie Pirkle '77** is involved with English and More, an English as Second Language program. This year, they celebrate 30 years of the program. Pirkle has an education degree, with a special education endorsement. In 1978, she earned a master's degree in education from UNA that specializes in learning disabilities.

**Janet Price '77** has been appointed to the St. Johns River Water Management District Governing Board of Florida. Price received her Bachelor of Science degree in biology.

## 19 80s

**Jeff Hodges '82** is the 2017 Arch Ward recipient, the oldest and most prestigious award presented by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Hodges has served as chief communications officer for the UNA athletic department for the past 34 years. Hodges graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism and history.

### Jim Whatley, Jr. '86

has been promoted to vice president at the Wilson Bank & Trust. Whatley has over 30 years of experience in financial services, joining the firm's investment center in 1999. Previously, Mr. Whatley served as financial advisor to Wilson Bank & Trust.

**Graham Sisson, Jr. '87** was a keynote speaker at the 2017 blind services retreat, speaking to state employees that work in rehabilitation. Sisson is the executive director for the State of Alabama Governors Office on Disability. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in accounting.

## 19 90s

### Dwayne Montgomery

'90 was announced as a new member of the Medizone International, Inc. Board of Directors. He has served as president and chief executive officer of a market-leading

company, Osiris Therapeutics. Montgomery graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and a minor in biology.

**Brad Haddock '91** has been announced as the new president and CEO of Alabama Central Credit Union. Haddock is an involved community member of the Shoals and has over 25 years of experience in the financial industry. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science.

**Matthew Bratton '94** was honored as an inductee in the Colbert County Sports Hall of Fame. Bratton was a skilled athlete on the baseball and football field of Deshler High School. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in education degree.

**Judy Spencer '95** was honored with the 2017 Leadership Award by the Women in Higher Education of the Mississippi Network. Spencer joined Mississippi State University as associate director of the human resources management department and seven years later was promoted to director. Spencer also received her M.B.A. from UNA.

**Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96**, was elected to the Florence City Council, District 4, in November 2016. While a student at UNA, Michelle was the president of the Student Government Association; this is her first elected political position with the City of Florence.

**Mark Laughlin '98** was recognized by the Recording Academy and GRAMMY Museum as a quarterfinalist for the fifth annual Music Educator Award. Laughlin is an associate professor of

## 19 40s

**Hubert Heck '47** was one of nine 2017 Cullman County Hall of Fame inductees. Heck was a skilled basketball player with a scholarship to play at Florence State Teachers College. He earned his bachelor's degree and during his career, he served in the Cullman County and Tuscaloosa County School Systems.

## 19 50s

**LTC Wiley T. Higgins '53** lives in Cumming, Georgia, and is currently pursuing his hobby of restoring and driving

music and Jazz Band director at Georgia Southwestern State University. He received a Bachelor of Arts in music, while majoring in music performance.

## 2000s

**Celynn Ballard '00** was selected as Mill Creek Elementary School's Teacher of the Year. Ballard is currently teaching the second grade. Previously, she has taught kindergarten, first, and fifth grades. Ballard graduated with a Master of Arts in education.

**Dr. Prentice T. Chandler '00** has been appointed dean of Martha Dickerson Eriksson College of Education of Austin Peay State University. Chandler graduated from with a Bachelor of Science degree in education as well as a Master of Arts in education, social science, for grades 6-12 in 2002.

**Nathaniel Provencio '01** is the current principal at Minnieville Elementary School in Woodbridge, Virginia. Provencio has been recognized by The Washington Post as the 2017 Principal of the Year for the metropolitan area. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in education.

**Casey Tate '02** was recognized by the Alabama Education Association as the state's top assistant principal. Tate graduated with a Bachelor of Science in elementary education, Master of Arts in elementary education in 2004, and a Master of Arts in educational administration in 2007.

**Corlandos Scott '03** debuts in Bailee Madison's

A Cowgirl's Story as the local town's detective. Scott graduated with a bachelor's degree in communication arts, theater. He previously appeared in HBO's series, *Westworld*, as a Union soldier. He also starred in the horror franchise films *Hayride* and *Hayride 2*.

**Michael Gunner '05** was named the Coordinator of Operations and Safety of the Madison school district. Gunner graduated with a Master of Arts in educational administration.

**Brian Givens '07** has been named the new principal at Rainbow Elementary School. Previously, Givens served as the Bob Jones High School athletic director. Givens graduated with a Bachelor of Science in secondary education in social science.

**Kerry Donaldson '09** joins the Athens school system as principal at Athens Middle School. Donaldson previously was assistant principal at Florence High school. Donaldson also received his Master of Arts in education degree from UNA.

**Jeremy Woods '09** has written his sixth book, *Using Technology for Your Church: A Guide for Pastors and Church Leaders*. This book is a guide to using technology in a positive way as a church. Woods graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing.

## 2010s

**Nicki Levering '10** was selected as the new head softball coach at Georgia Southwestern State University, after serving as head coach

at Georgia State College. Levering served as a graduate assistant at UNA and received her Master of Arts in health and human performance.

### **Dr. Ibrahim S. Elsheikh**

'15 has been selected to join the Physician Board at the American Health Council. Dr. Elsheikh is experienced in Pediatrics and Patient Care, and through this new position, he will share his knowledge and experience on the Physician Board. Dr. Elsheikh received his Master of Business Administration degree.

**Matthew Fesmire '16** was selected as the new director of the Yellowstone County Museum in Montana. Fesmire graduated with a Master of Arts in public history.

**Lindsey Shirley '16** joined the Birmingham Barons as a Flex Ticket specialist. Shirley graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in professional marketing and a minor in sports management. She has worked in baseball for eight seasons, including some volunteer time with UNA's baseball team.

## Travel with the Lions!

[una.edu/alumni/travel](http://una.edu/alumni/travel)



# EXCERPTS from the ARCHIVES



## 1949 HOMECOMING

State Teachers College  
Florence, Alabama



"It's Grid Time In '49"

In 1949, under the new presidency of Dr. E. B. Norton, a football program was reestablished at Florence State Teachers College. The first football-related Homecoming was held on November 19, 1949, with the theme "It's Grid Time in '49." Dormitory decorations were a major part of festivities for many years. On the eve of that first Homecoming, students of Keller Hall (then a men's dorm) are seen here standing guard over their decorated dorm entrance. The elaborate decoration had been destroyed by a mysterious fire the night before. What had taken three weeks to create originally was reconstructed in one day thanks to the generous donation of funds and supplies by the local community. Through the use of a lion's roar record and an amplifier, the big Leo roared throughout the Homecoming day. The efforts of the Keller residents were rewarded with a first place trophy in the decorations contest.



IN MEMORY

**YEARS UNIDENTIFIED**

**Dr. Frankie Beard**

1947 – March 4, 2017

**Rick Biddle**

December 2, 1950 – April 27, 2017

**Merle Twitty Englebert**

November 2, 1922 – June 20, 2017

**Jean Wilson Martin**

January 31, 1920 – March 30, 2017

**Martha Hudson Perry**

August 1, 1939 – June 24, 2017

**Nancy Sinclair (Banks) Saltsman**

March 9, 1935 – March 26, 2017

**Mary Wann Sedenquist**

September 10, 1942 – March 26, 2017

**Michael Burnett Self**

February 24, 2017 – May 31, 2017

**Raymond "Mitch" Sexton**

November 12, 1972 – February 26, 2017

**Sergeant Ronald West II**

March 16, 1965 – May 4, 2017

**1940s**

**Sarah Olivia Clay Free '44**

November 30, 1923 – May 21, 2017

**Edgar Hyche '48**

1924 – May 5, 2017

**1950s**

**Nita Graham Head '52**

May 8, 1931 – March 11, 2017

**Jack Waddell Harrison '55**

September 5, 1931 – May 1, 2017

**Dr. Julian Crowder Henderson '57**

January 19, 1938 – June 9, 2017

**Dr. James L. Wayland '58**

March 14, 1933 – February 19, 2017

**1960s**

**John Thomas Utley '62**

May 7, 1937 – January 7, 2017

**Gordon Crosswhite '63**

February 28, 1939 – March 22, 2017

**Jimmie Little Brown '64**

November 20, 1940 – April 19, 2017

**Wallace Hubert Thompson Jr. '66**

July 29, 1944 – May 9, 2017

**Kerry Moore Burrows '68**

September 7, 1946 – March 1, 2017

**1970s**

**Reverend Donald H. Ross '70**

March 30, 1940 – March 11, 2017

**Doris B. Bryson '73**

1930 – May 29, 2017

**Van Karlyle Morris '74**

April 13, 1952 – February 1, 2017

**Carolyn Joan Goza Cleveland '75**

April 25, 1928 – April 10, 2017

**Stewart O'Bannon III '76**

January 22, 1955 – March 22, 2017

**1980s**

**Denalyn Osborne Levy '80**

November 10, 19580 – June 20, 2017

**Terry David Bryson III '81**

1958 – March 10, 2017

**Paul Pickens '85**

1958 – April 20, 2017

**Jasbeer Kaur '89**



## PARENTS HONOR

### Late University of North Alabama Alumna

Angela and Michael Vaughan honored the memory of their daughter **Tiffany Paige Ferguson '15** the best way they knew how: by trying to help someone else, much like their daughter did.

Ferguson was a 2015 graduate of the Anderson College of Nursing and was working as a nurse at St. Thomas West Hospital in Nashville before her life was tragically cut short. Now the Vaughans have created a scholarship in her honor.

The new Tiffany Paige Ferguson Nursing Memorial Endowed Scholarship will be awarded to a first or second year nursing student who has been accepted into the nursing program.

The recipient must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and demonstrate financial need based on the current and future need-based guidelines of the University. The Dean of the Anderson College of Nursing in consultation with Student Financial Services will ultimately make the selection.

For more information or to donate, please contact the UNA Foundation at (256) 765-4670 or advancement@una.edu.

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## ALUMNI INFORMATION UPDATE

Name (include maiden name if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year(s) and Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Business telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

### I want to get involved with UNA alumni in my area...

- |   |                                       |  |                                    |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Club Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Homecoming   | <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni Committee Assignment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic Events        | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit Students            | <input type="checkbox"/> Reunions  |

Have you won an award, changed jobs, earned a promotion or completed another degree?

Your UNA classmates would like to know more about it! Send us your news and we will publish it in a subsequent issue of the *University of North Alabama Magazine*. Please complete the form and send it to the Office of Alumni Relations, UNA Box 5047, Florence, AL 35632-0001 or e-mail to [alumni1@una.edu](mailto:alumni1@una.edu).

[una.edu/alumni](http://una.edu/alumni)

## UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

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# SAVE THE DATE!

**UNA**  
*Giving Day*  
**11•28•2017**  
**#GIVINGTUESDAY**

#GivingTuesday is a global day dedicated to giving back.  
You will have 24 hours to make a difference at UNA.  
On this day, you can give online and share your pride  
with alumni and friends.